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MEAN MACHINES SEGA

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI

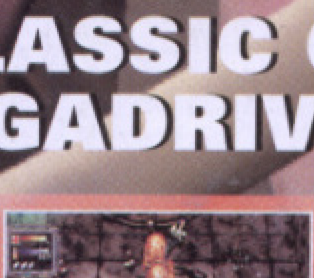
THE KING OF FIGHTERS '95
COMES OUT FIGHTING

ISS SOCCER
THE CLASSIC COMES TO MEGADRIVE



VIRTUA FIGHTER
GAME GEAR!

SCORCHIO! FOR SATURN



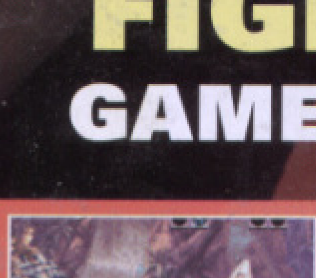
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NHL '96



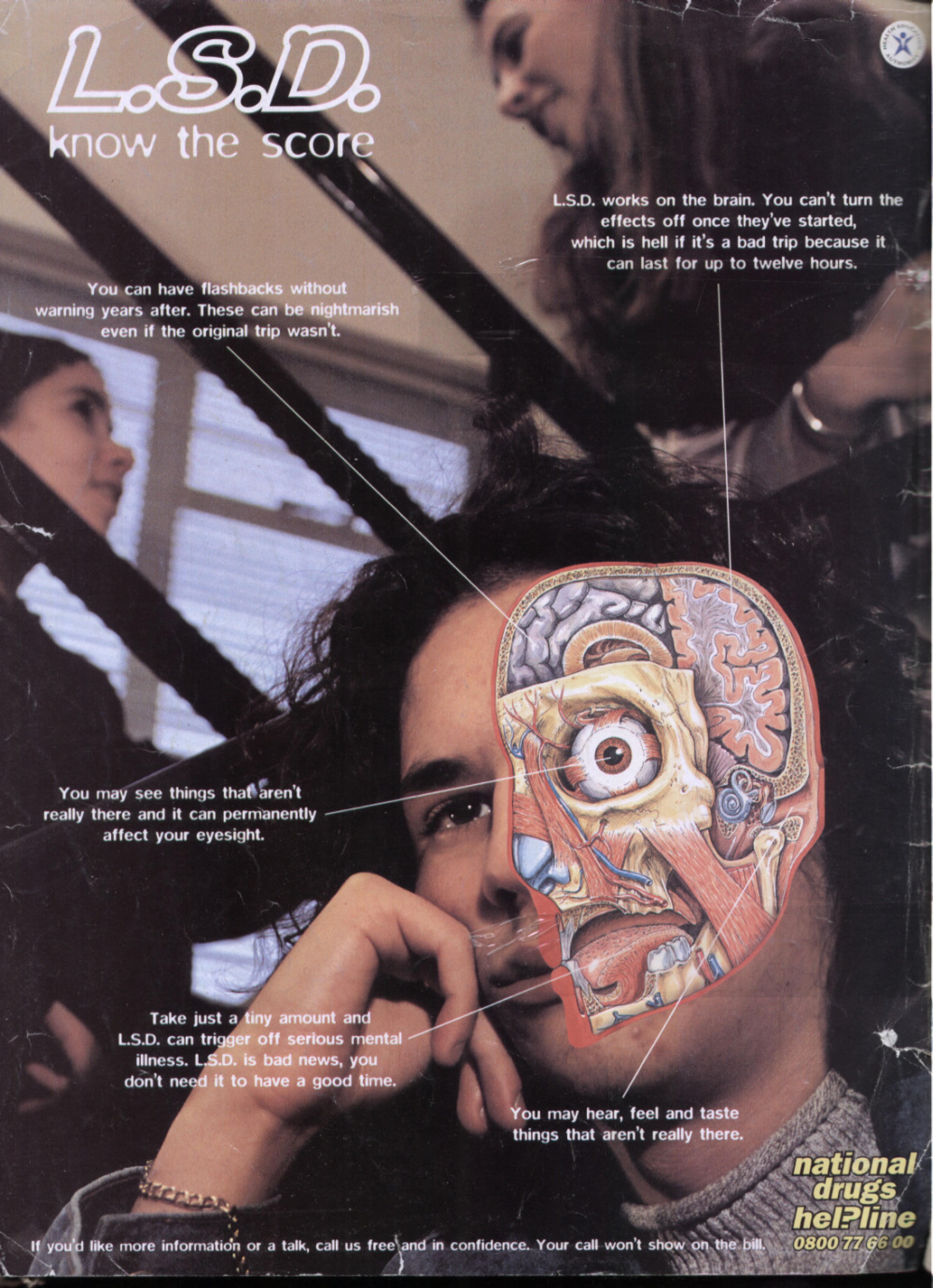
DIE HARD TRILOGY



VAMPIRE HUNTER



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA


L.S.D.
know the score
L.S.D. works on the brain. You can't turn the effects off once they've started, which is hell if it's a bad trip because it can last for up to twelve hours.
You can have flashbacks without warning years after. These can be nightmarish even if the original trip wasn't.
You may see things that aren't really there and it can permanently affect your eyesight.
Take just a tiny amount and L.S.D. can trigger off serious mental illness. L.S.D. is bad news, you don't need it to have a good time.
You may hear, feel and taste things that aren't really there.
national drugs hel?line
0800 77 66 00
If you'd like more information or a talk, call us free and in confidence. Your call won't show on the bill.

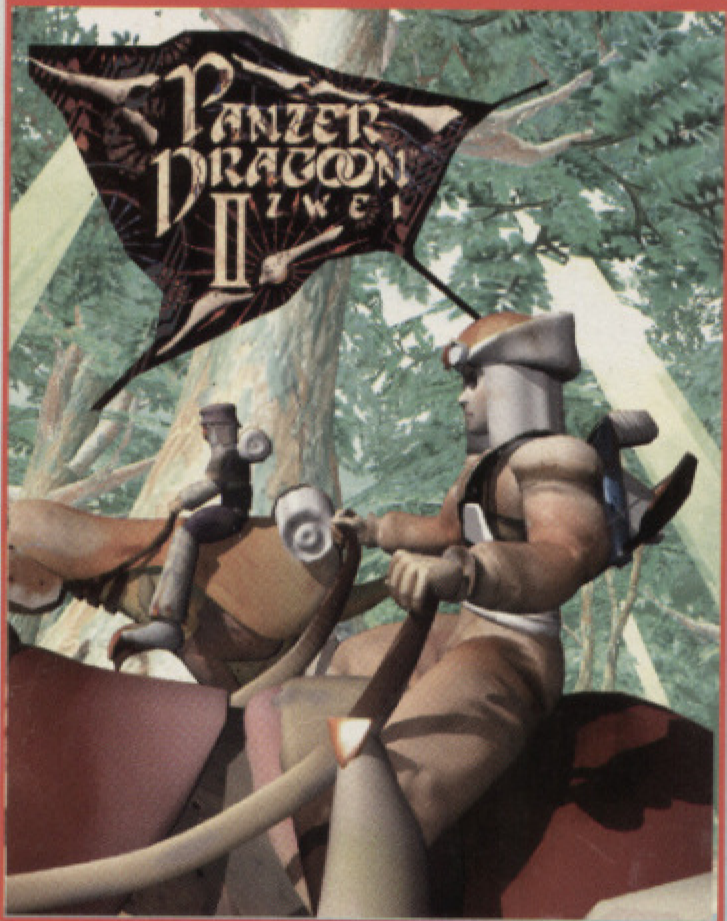


MEAN MACHINES SEGA PRESENT AN ANDROMEDA SOFTWARE PRODUCTION FOR SEGA ENTERPRISES 'PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI'.
DIRECTED BY TOMOHORI KONDO
MAIN DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION BY YESHIDO KUNTARO DESIGNED BY YUKIO FATASJUI
SETTING BY KATSUHIKO SUTO MUSIC BY YAYOI WACHI VISUAL EFFECTS BY JUN MATSUO
PRESENTED IN STEREO ON SEGA SATURN SYSTEM.

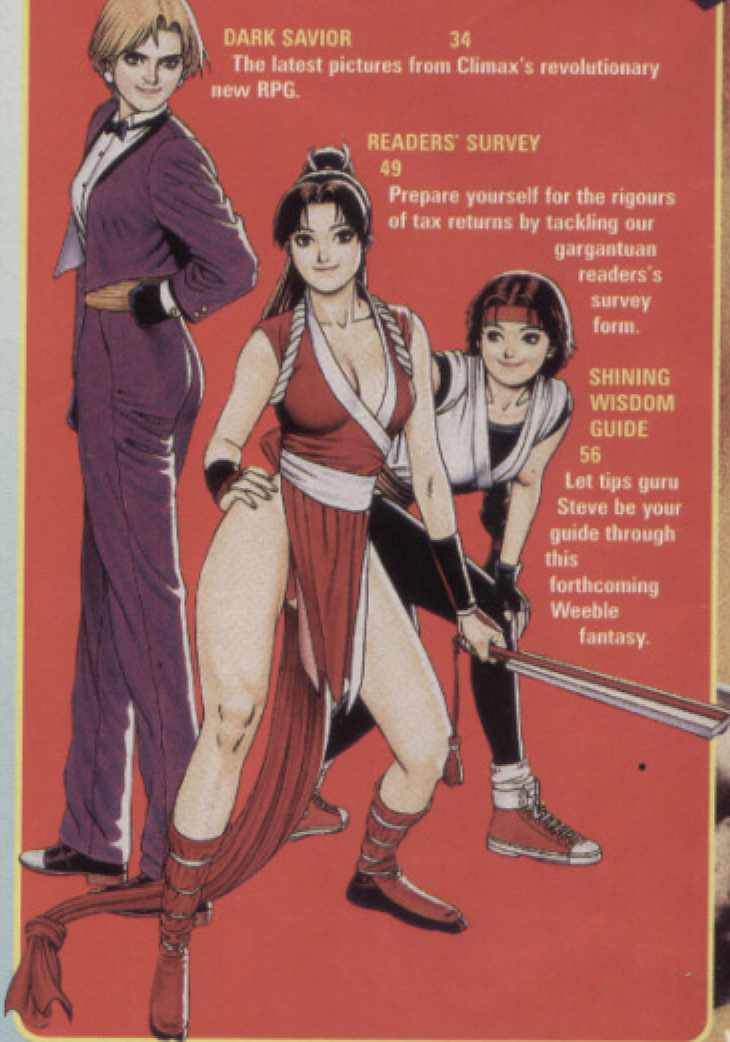
CONTENTS

COVER STORY

MEAN MACHINES EXCLUSIVE

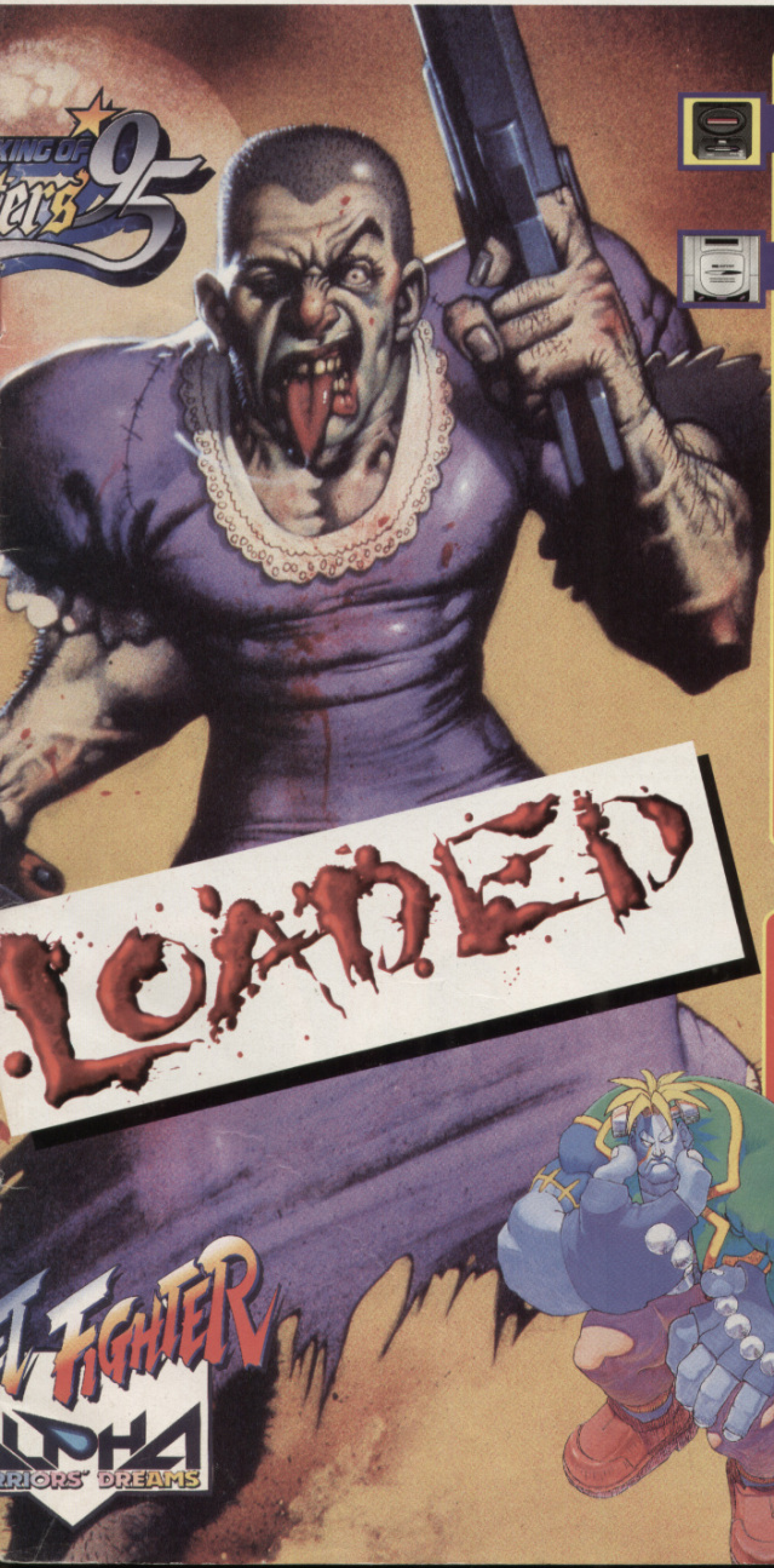


FEATURES



REGULARS





REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

SATURN

PREVIEWS



EDITORIAL

A CONNECTION IS MADE

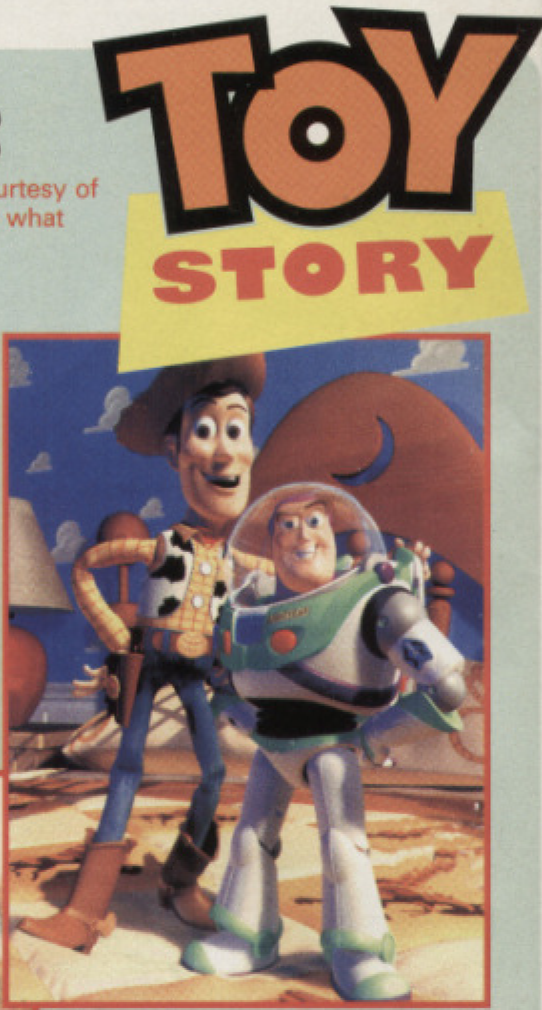
This month you'll find the first review of the first Saturn link-up title, Gebockers. It's crap, but that's of little importance. It's what Sega make of the cable that's important. At the moment, the view from Japan is that split-screen is better than link-up, as the cable requires two Saturns, two monitors and two copies of the game in close proximity. The argument has always been that network play is fun for magazine writers like us, but useless for you lot. Okay, that's true to a point. But the third-party developers have got ideas for the cable, and it opens up whole new areas of gameplay. Despite the lukewarm response, it looks like the AM1 Virtual On conversion will be the first game by Sega to use the add on. Hopefully it won't be the last. In the meantime, enjoy the issue and please send back the questionnaire.

GUS



TOYS R US

We went to Toy Story, courtesy of Disney UK. Want to know what we thought of the film?



"I thought the film was so good I'm going to spend all my wages on licensed toys and merchandise until the next Disney film comes out!"

– GUS

"This is smart enough to betray the fact that it isn't, strictly speaking, a Disney film at all. Deserves more than its destined 'special achievement' Oscar."

– MARCUS



"Fantastiche. MEGA MEGA MEGA with capital 'M's. Go and see this film NOW! "

– LUCY

"Better than when Ian Wright left Arsenal."

– STEVE

ELECTRIC DREAMS

Of course, we're one big happy family here at MEAN MACHINES, and all satisfied with our lot. But if the opportunity to do a bit of moonlighting arises, none us will look a gift horse in the mouth...



GUS

"I've been working for Bullfrog recently," admits Gus. "They've been quite good to me, giving me a bit part in Theme Park. I'm the comfy sweater-wearing father of the family that gets sucked into their TV at the beginning. They've promised me a promotion – I'm going to be one of the ride mechanics next month." Gus ambitions to join the navy: "If I could be anyone in a game I'd be Admiral Blocky in Wing Arms. That trick of talking out of sync with my lips would make a great party piece."



CLAIRE

Claire's been putting those formidable thighs to good use recently, understudying for Sarah Bryant in Virtua Fighter. Since Sarah had a make-over and moved on to VF2, the post has been vacant on the original game. A chisel and hammer soon ensured Claire looked the part. "The best bit's getting to beat my brother up!" she enthuses. "I hope to move on to Baku Baku – I'd like to be the little green bird that cries when the computer loses. But I can't quite fit into the costume."



MARCUS

Marcus has been spending his spare time playing Santos in Cyberia. "I think what first attracted me to the role was the chance to play voyeur and leer at that chick copping off with that bloke. It all gets a bit uncomfortable later when I get knocked unconscious, but you have to take the rough with the smooth." Marcus has an unusual acting ambition: "I'd love to be one of the squidgy green aliens in the Toy Story game. There aren't many lines to learn and I think I've got the looks for it."

SEPERATED AT BIRTH?

Ever get that feeling of deja vu while crouched before your console?

MARCOS ➔

Spot the difference. NOT. Marcus recently arrived late, claiming he just had to trim his beard...he's clearly been modelling himself on the perv from Cyberia.







ANGUS ➔

Spooky resemblence – Angus Swan, our glorious leader, and Mr Brown Cardigan, father of the Theme Park family.

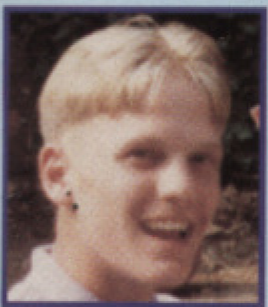


CLAIRE BRYANT ➔

Sarah Bryant was chosen to represent our Cluuurrrrr because of the size of her choller whollers and her super sonic athletic build. Clur has recently taken to cartwheeling across the office, shouting 'Hi ya!' and felling male members of staff with expertly executed kicks. She puts it down to pre-menstral tension, but we know better.







STEVIE ➔

Our clean cut Steve Key has been likened to Virtua Cop's Smarty. It must be the dazzling blonde hair and baby blue eyes that has the chicks swooning for PC Key.



LUCY STRIDE ➔

Lucy has the same distended body as the suave and sophisticated Kimberley Stride. Miss Hill strenuously denies that she in fact resembles a ten-pin bowling skittle with her kit off, and the rest of us will have to wait till the next Christmas party to find out. Only joking.







LUCY

Lucy's collection of rubberwear and bondage gear has recently been put to good use in her role as sexy scientist Kimberley Stride in Blam: Machinehead. "It's reet freezing in that clobber," she moans during a rare fag break, "and I'm getting a bit tired of being strapped to that incendiary device, but at least I get to take the clothes home at the weekend." Lucy's ambition is to play Woody in the Toy Story game. "Or anyone who wears a decent pair of trousers."



STEVE

Steve's been cleaning up the streets of Virtua City recently – and he ain't using a broom to do it. "It's smart being Smarty off Virtua Cop. I've been taking out perps and zooming around on patrol – and I haven't even got a driving license!" Steve has lofty ambitions for his future role. "I intend to play a certain blue hedgehog in this year's new Sonic game. I've already started filling my face with chips in order to cultivate the perfect physique."

GAME BOYS AND GIRLS

DR ROBOTNIK
Steve 'badnik' Merrett
METAL SONIC
Angus 'spinball' Swan
AMY ROSE
Claire 'Moebius' Coulthard
KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA
Marcus 'Casino Night' Hearn
MILES PROWER
Lucy 'Tails' Hill
CHAOS EMERALD
Steven 'Super Sonic' Key

MRS ROBOTNIK
Liza Merret
KOOPA TROOPER
Tina Hicks

SPECIAL THANKS TO: Steve Leigh and Paul Bufton.

EDITORIAL ZONE: EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
INTER STELLAR COMMUNICATION: 0171-972 6700
USELESS FAX: 0171-972 6701
PRINTING BY: KOOPA Clegg
COLOUR: Sarah-Jane Leavey, Gary Lord and Sarah Best
DISTRIBUTION: BBC Frontline
PRINTED IN THE UK
© EMAP Images 1996

COVER: Panzer Dragoon Zwei.

SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUE ENQUIRIES
TOWER PUBLISHING
TOWER HOUSE
SOVEREIGN PARK
LATHKILL ST
MARKET HARBORO
LEICESTER
LE16 9ET
TEL: 01858-468888

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 ISSUES INC P&P)
United Kingdom and BFPO: £30.00
Overseas Surface Mail: £36.00
Airmail Europe and Eire: £42.00
Airmail Zones 1 & 2: £66.00
Airmail Zone 2: £69.00

Back issues UK: £3.50 each
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ENDING BIT
Some people say I won't go far.
Maybe they be right.
But if going far is to Bath in a car,
Perhaps I'll just sit tight.

MEAN MACHINES SEGA use Dolby Surround to test out all featured software.

DOLBY SURROUND

NEWS

SATURN 2

HARDWARE

BY SEGA

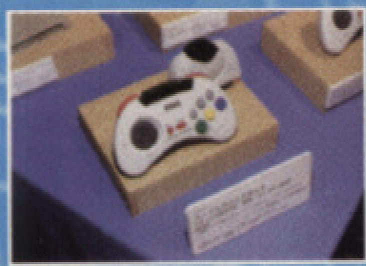
SATURN 2

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Sega plan the launch of Saturn 2 this month in Japan. The machine has the exact same specification of the original Saturn and is fully compatible. The restyling move is to produce the machine more cost-efficiently, with some components merged or removed. The move is much the same as the change from Megadrive to Megadrive 2 which occured in 1994. Saturn 2 will also allow Sega to cut the Saturn's price further from 24,000 Yen (£149) to 20,000 (£125). Sega UK have no date for Saturn 2 here, but it's certain to come. The change should have some impact on price here in the UK, but it's too early to say how much.









So much has happened this month, we've just about managed to get the essentials into News. You'll come out of the next four pages refreshed, enthused and briefed in all you need to know about Sega during April.

ALIEN EMPIRE

BAD MOJO

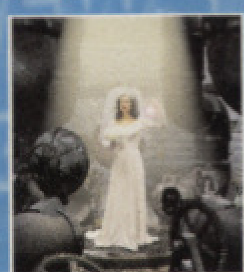
BY ACCLAIM

SATURN

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: US

Bad Mojo is the most original PC game in years. That's the general opinion of the press following the launch of the CD-ROM roach game last month. And our insectoid correspondent tells us that its almost certain that a Saturn version of the game is sure to appear. Bad Mojo takes the unsavoury Roger Samms on a journey through the mankiest house in America in the form of a humble cockroach. Gameplay involves pushing cigarette butts and climbing over dead rats. Charming. An amazing amount of work has gone into the still and video sequences and it's a quite unique experience. Peruse these PC shots until something more concrete appears. We estimate Christmas at the earliest.



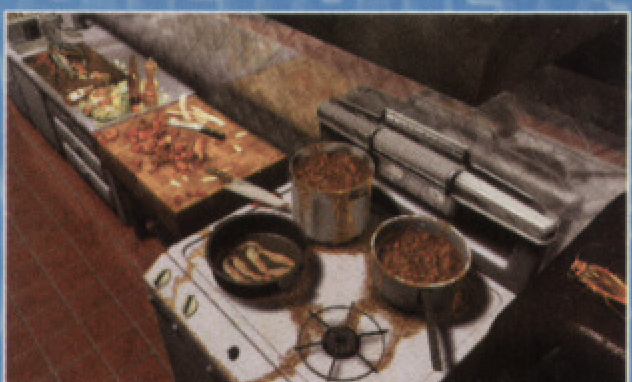
KEY

competition · new game · japan news · tipped for the top · exclusive news · film news · news update · arcade conversion · gossip · british development

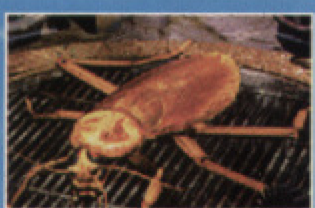












CARRY ON CLEO

EXHUMED

BY BMG

SATURN

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: US



BMG came to us with news of an exciting new shoot 'em up based around the Duke Nukem 3-D engine, which has just been released to much acclaim on PC. Exhumed is a wholly different game, set in the creepy Pharoah tombs of ancient Egypt. Players wander around the maze-like interiors of the temples and pyramids destroying cryptular denizens and uncovering treasures. BMG have high hopes of the U.S originated game being one of the big shoot 'em ups of the year, and it's one type of Pyramid selling which we hope is successful.











A ROUND CALLED ALLISS

ACTUA GOLF

BY GREMLIN

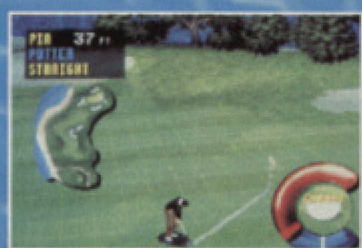
SATURN

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: UK







Golf on the Saturn has been okay to date, but hardly adventurous. Step in Gremlin Graphics, with the Indiana Jones of golf simulations, Actua Golf ('there's nothing virtual about Actua!'). Yes, it's golf, but from what we've seen, and what you here see, the most graphically detailed attempt yet at creating the subtle textures and landscapes of a woodland wonderland. It's all full 3-D as well, with viewing angles from just about anywhere on the course and split-window replays (pretty impressive). The animation is all motion-captured, with local golf professional performing actions as diverse as 'picking club from bag' to 'lining up on green'. Actua Golf's killer feature, though, is the persona of Peter Alliss, the TV commentator who dons slacks and lends a full commentary, with thousands of sampled phrases in his repertoire. A feature next month and a review surprisingly soon after.

Gremlin INTERACTIVE

SYNDICATION RIGHTS

SYNDICATE WARS

PUBLISHER: BULLFROG

SATURN

RELEASE: AUGUST

ORIGIN: UK

MEAN MACHINES are the first to know that the Bullfrog's 'Playstation only' product, Syndicate Wars, will now be a future Saturn title. The next generation sequel to the fantastic Syndicate has been long in development, with such innovations as video sequences interlaced into fully manipulable 3-D worlds, light-sourcing, etc. Now Bullfrog, bouyed by the quality of their other Saturn conversions, are satisfied the machine can handle 'Wars. The future-set game places you as a cyborg operative of a crime Syndicate, with orders to fulfil some bloody and ruthless missions. As the PSX version is not out yet, the Saturn version won't be that far behind!









GUT WRENCING

GEARS AND GUTS

PUBLISHER: GREMLIN

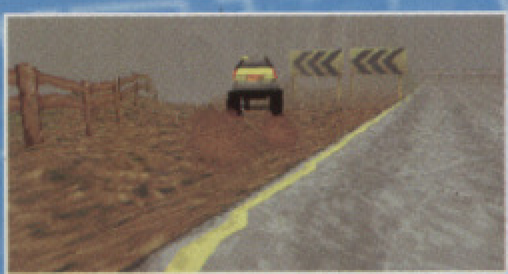
SATURN

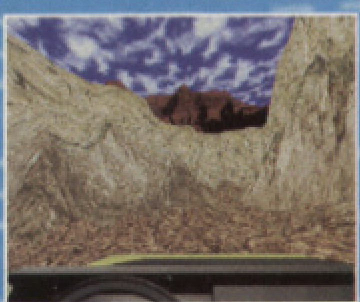
RELEASE: JULY 1996

ORIGIN: UK

MEAN MACHINES here print the first shots of a completely original driving game from Gremlin Graphics, developing under the feisty title of Gears and Guts. It's the Saturn's first off-road racing game, adding huge four by four trucks to the range of vehicles in the machine's racing repertoire. It's also a joint development across several formats, each designed to optimise the machine's capabilities. The project team are aiming to offer something different by creating complex virtual worlds for the courses, where the 'track' is less rigidly defined than normal. The physics of the track contours and trucks is also hugely complex — each wheel will have independent suspension! Gears and Guts looks highly original in look and style and should make some waves later this year.









SLIPPERY WHEN WET

SLIPSTREAM

PUBLISHER: GREMLIN

SATURN

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: UK

Slipstream is a Saturn racing game Gremlin are considering for later in 1996. The game, a port from last year's PC title, is currently a firm proposal for the Japanese market — a publisher there specifically requested it. If it comes to the UK in time, Gremlin may produce an updated version. Predating Wipeout, Slipstream uses futuristic glider craft and non-conventional race settings such as Alpine glaciers and Amazonian forests.











BITCHIN' CABINETS

VARIOUS

PUBLISHER: SEGA

ST-V

RELEASE: SUMMER

ORIGIN: JAPAN



Sega are aiming to strengthen their dominant position in Japanese arcades with a constant stream of titles revealed at the recent ACME and AOU shows. The first excellent news is that Virtua Fighter Kidz is an ST-V game, not a Model 2 as previously reported. The ST-V is much less powerful than Model 2, and converting to Saturn (now described as 'virtually certain') is a cinch. The other ST-V arcade game planned is Decathlete, Sega's first multi-sports game (AM3). It sees a return to old-fashioned button-bashing, but with simultaneous multi-play and polygon stadium graphics. Saturn version — extremely likely.



VARIOUS

PUBLISHER: SEGA

MODEL 2/3

RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: JAPAN



The luxury end of Sega's arcade business is the AM division Model 2 developments. At the head of this is Yu Suzuki and his present quest is bringing Virtua Fighter 3 into the arcade. No game can possibly have more significance for Sega. That explains the awesome technology involved for the first Model 3 game. Early VF3 demos have stunned spectators with 1 million polygons per second, 60 frame per second rate, and incredible resolution on texturing detail. The characters have been described as 'almost human' and the leap in graphic quality has been judged to be greater than that between VF1 and VF2. And it will go on, with Suzuki planning 4 and 5 to follow.



In the meantime, Last Bronx is an AM3 beat 'em up designed to bridge the gap between Fighting Vipers and VF3. It uses realistic characters and Tokyo street settings for strong vigilante images and, unlike VF2, weapons are employed. AM3's other new coin-op is Gunblade, an over-the-top helicopter game set in the skyscraper-bound streets of New York.

HARD IS ON



News Corporation, publishers of the super soaraway Sun, are getting into games through a new subsidiary of their movie studio, 20th Century Fox. Fox Interactive will be using Fox properties (Alien, The Simpsons etc) for their projects. First up is Die Hard Trilogy, being constructed by Probe Software in Croydon, and part of the Acclaim group. Die Hard will use elements and scenes of all three movies featuring Bruce Willis as John McClane. As such it's a 'portmanteau' collection of game styles, with the emphasis on Virtua Cop-style shoot out sequences. Fox strenuously deny it will merely be a 'Cop clone and early viewers of the game have come away mightily impressed. Preview next month.



DIE HARD TRILOGY

PUBLISHER: FOX INTERACTIVE

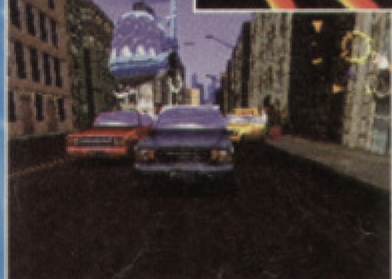
SATURN

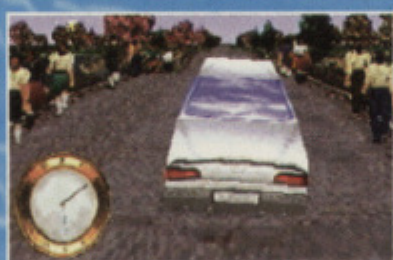
RELEASE: TBA

ORIGIN: UK









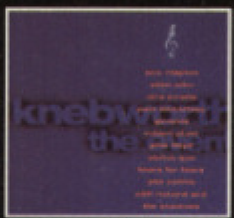
GOS

First, let's talk about the game no-one else is talking about. Nights. An unassuming title for the game which is being touted as Sega's Saturn answer to the Nintendo 64. Few have seen the game, though an early demo lurks in deepest Chiswick, but fanciful talk of full 3-D virtual environments, Mario-rivalling polygon manipulation is rife. Although nothing is being said officially, this is Sega's No. 1 project — outranking the AM2 coin-op conversions. One snag — Nintendo can't get their act together with the Nintendo 64. The Jap launch is now delayed until June earliest, and with no clear answers on why, it might fall further. A UK N64 for 1996 release is looking less likely each day. Slippage is the order of the day with Saturn games like Tomb Raider (back to October) and Return to Zork. The Activision adventure was within days of its official release when it was suddenly pulled back for 'a few months'. Thank heavens for new projects like Tunnel B1 from Ocean, being produced by Neon in Germany. MEAN MACHINES hope to have a report from there next month. There's also Reloaded from Gremlin and a definite early release of Infogrames' Alone in the Dark 2 in English language form. Yippee.

VIDEO CD *REVIEWS*

The latest Video CD releases reviewed. To watch any of these on your Saturn you'll need Sega's Video CD card, on sale now.

KNEBWORTH – THE EVENT



This triple disc set, assembling the highlights of a 1990 benefit gig that was previously only available across three video cassettes, is a very promising start to Castle Communications' Video CD releases. This epic concert stars a motley crew of rock 'elder statesmen': Dire Straits are dull, Cliff Richard is cheesy and Status Quo are annoying. On the other hand, Robert Plant and Jimmy Page are still nails (if a little geriatric), Paul McCartney is in Beatles-friendly mode and Pink Floyd are defiantly magnificent in the face of a rainstorm. A lucky dip that usually comes up trumps.

CERTIFICATE:	E
PRICE	£19.99





THIS IS VIDEO CLASH



Second-only to The Sex Pistols in notoriety, The Clash first made their mark in 1977 and continued to present politically-edged punk until they disintegrated in the early Eighties. This is Video Clash gathers eight tracks, from their second through to their penultimate albums. Highlights include the rousing London Calling, the melodic Train in Vain and the Levi's advert fave Should I Stay Or Should I Go? While this CD illustrates their musical versatility, all but the most recent tracks here now sound badly dated, and the group's well 'ard posturing now seems merely quaint. Encoded in 'block-o-vision'.

CERTIFICATE:	E
PRICE	£12.99





MESSAGE TO LOVE – ISLE OF WIGHT 1970



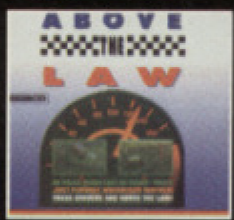
Another well-packaged Castle release. This film, shot in 1970 but only completed and edited in 1995, is a revelatory and frank document of the last great music festival – the bitterness and disappointment of the organisers leaves as great an impression as the music. And that's of the greatest vintage – Jimi Hendrix (in his last UK performance, merely two weeks before he died), The Who, Free, and The Doors all sound excellent, even if they sometimes look a bit worse for wear. An essential snapshot of the end of an era. As with the Knebworth discs, the encoding struggles with the numerous crowd scenes.

CERTIFICATE:	E
PRICE	£19.99





ABOVE THE LAW



"Sit back and enjoy the carnage and the capers in Above The Law!" gushes the Steve Priestley-style narrator in this blocky compilation of motorsport pile-ups. His hilarious voice-overs specialise in patronising comments following the unfortunate drivers' mishaps. "Let's impress the crowd with a wheelie," he chirps after a motorcyclist raises his front wheel. "Hmm," he quips after the poor bloke falls off. "He got that wrong didn't he?" The highlight of the whole CD, however, is his stern warning that sometimes "the unexpected can catch you unawares." Good grief...

CERTIFICATE:	E
PRICE	£12.99



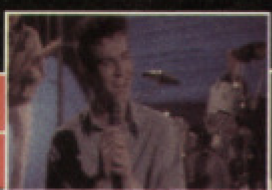


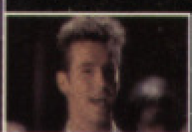
WET WET WET – END OF PART ONE, THEIR GREATEST HITS



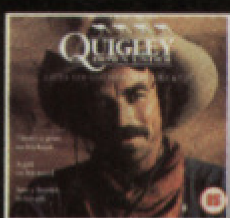
Scotland's drippy AOR boys in fifteen videos that span their singles career up to 1993. Wishing I Was Lucky, their first and best single, kicks everything off with an unbelievably tacky promo that sees the lads sucked into their television sets with 'hilarious' consequences. From thereon everything was smartened up a bit. If you can make it through Sweet Little Mystery, Angel Eyes (spelt 'Angle Eyes' on the sleeve) and Sweet Surrender you'll be rewarded with a selection of tracks from the wilderness years before they resurfaced with the unintelligible promo for Goodnight Girl. A well encoded spoonful of syrupy smooth soul.

CERTIFICATE:	E
PRICE	£17.99





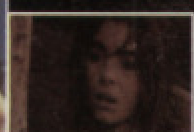
QUIGLEY DOWN UNDER (1990)



A rarity on two counts – a Video CD Western from the otherwise quiet Philips. This impressively photographed movie tells the story of Matthew Quigley (Tom Selleck), an American long-distance marksman who travels to Western Australia in 1860. He soon finds himself up against a dastardly rancher Marston (Alan Rickman) for refusing to shoot Aborigines and up against the barmy but beautiful 'Crazy Cara' (Laura San Giacomo) in an entirely different sense of the phrase. Tom Selleck projects a roguish charm that the film itself never quite matches, and Alan Rickman is, well, the baddie. You know the routine. Well made and well encoded, if ultimately unengaging.

CERTIFICATE:	18
PRICE	£12.99






THE BLACKHEADS
OUT NOW ON TAPE.
REMOVES BLACKHEADS QUICKLY AND GENTLY
UNBLOCKS PORES
OXY
BLACKOUT
IF YOU'RE SERIOUSLY INTO BLACKHEADS, AND YOU'D RATHER NOT BE, CHECK OUT NEW OXY BLACKOUT.. IT HAS SPECIAL STICKY TAPES THAT LIFT OUT BLACKHEADS GENTLY. BLACKHEADS? OXYCUTE 'EM!
OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.

CREAM OF SEGA

OFFICIAL CHARTS © ELSPA   COMPILED BY CHART TRACK

Welcome, pop pickers, to your monthly guide to the Sega hit parade, brought to you in association with Chart Track and Pot Noodle (tm) – the snack with a stench. If you want to see what's toppermost of the poppermost with the teenagers, then you're in the right place. You're tuned to Radio Mean Machines – the home of the hits. Remember kids, numbers in brackets indicate titles' positions on last issue's chart. Alright? Not 'arf. etc.

HYPE CHART

What you, and we, are most looking forward to.

1 (-)
TOY STORY
Go and see the film. Now. It's the dog's.

2 (1)
WIPEOUT
The long wait is nearly over.

3 (3)
ALIEN TRILOGY
In space, no-one can hear you scream.

4 (-)
ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3
Wins our vote as the best MK yet.

5 (5)
MANX TT
The rumours are still flying – this is going to be awesome.

BE AN OPINION FORMER

Our ongoing lists of readers' faves is becoming more and more popular. Each month we list the games you most want and those you are looking forward to. Just fill in the coupon. Also, take a guess at what the most popular game of the month will be. One of those smart enough to guess the top of the reader's chart will win a copy of that game! Congratulations to last month's winner, Michael Morgan from Berkhamsted, Essex.

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

____

____

____

I'M MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

____

____

____

I PREDICT THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

____

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Send to: Cream of Sega, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

SALES CHART: SATURN

Chart Track's survey of the top-selling CDs.

1 (-)
SEGA RALLY (Sega)
Unstoppable, unbeatable and untouchable.

2 (-)
F1 CHALLENGE (Sega)
A new entry for the Pal conversion of F1 Live Information.

3 (2)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (Sega)
Not as all-conquering as it deserves to be.

4 (3)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (Sega)
Still the top-seller in a field (pitch?) of one.

5 (-)
WING ARMS (Sega)
Another new entry for this passable WWII shoot 'em up.

6 (4)
WORMS (Team 17)
Losing ground after an impressive start.

7 (5
FIRESTORM: THUNDER-HAWK 2 (Core)
One of 1995's greatest Saturn games.

8 (-)
D (Acclaim)
A new entry for this massively hyped RPG.

9 (-)
SIM CITY 2000 (Sega)
The classic town-planning sim finally arrives for Saturn.

10 (6)
VIRTUA COP (Sega)
Virtua City has never been safer.

ELSPA

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

Chart Track's guide to 16-bit sales.

1 (1)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (EA)
This is clearly going to take some shifting.

2 (2)
SONIC AND KNUCKLES (Sega)
Heavy discounts boost sales.

3 (9)
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2 (Sega)
Another discounted classic.

4 (-)
TAZMANIA: ESCAPE FROM MARS (Sony)
Toss from the past hits the bins.

5 (5)
MICKEY MANIA (Sony)
Ever get that feeling of deja vu?

6 (8)
ECCO 2: TIDES OF TIME (Sega)
This right-on fish 'em up is still selling.

7 (3)
PREMIER MANAGER (Sega)
Starting to slip after massive success over Christmas.

8 (4)
MICRO MACHINES '96 (Codemasters)
The latest episode in the MM saga.

9 (6)
PGA TOUR '96 (EA)
The quality of the latest PGA keeps it popular.

10 (-)
PSYCHO PINBALL (Codemasters)
Another bonkers classic from Codies.

ELSPA

OFFICE CHART SATURN

Our choice of next generation titles.

1 (-)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
Simply stunning. We are enthralled.

2 (-)
STREETFIGHTER ALPHA
This tricky old dog scores highly with Steve.

3 (-)
WIPEOUT
Still a bit rough, but the game is a classic.

4 (-)
MAGIC CARPET
Big fave with Gus, who's taken to wearing a turban.

5 (-)
GUN GRIFFON
Plays better than it looks, according to Marcus.

READERS CHART SATURN

Your choice of the best Saturn titles.

1 (2)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
This awesome beat 'em up grabs pole position.

2 (1)
SEGA RALLY
Shunted into second – but not far behind.

3 (-)
X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM
A new entry, still on import only.

4 (-)
BUG
Sega's 3-D platformer has lasting appeal.

5 (-)
FIRESTORM: THUNDER-HAWK 2
No change for Core's copter sim.



GEX™
For strength, speed, and that healthy reptilian glow.
Do not adjust your horizontal hold. 450 frames of GEX animation, CD-quality sound and hand-rendered backgrounds.
Advance thru different worlds like Indiana Jonesville and Frank N. Steintown. (Legal weasels require we be vague.)
Try jumping, tail-whipping & face-sticking to discover secretlevels/bonus stages that only Irv in Engineering knows about.
Electronic Gaming Monthly "Editors' Choice Gold Award"
Diehard Gamefan "Character of the Year"
Get ready for one serious See-Food Cocktail. It's GEX, your bug munching, tongue-lashing alter-ego. Oh yeah, we got Hungry-Man portions of pop-culture cheese all right. With late night TV freaks like Gamera and Flatulence Man. But it's our special sauce—over 300 hilarious one-liners and sound effects from HBO® comedian Dana Gould—that give GEX major attitude. So forget about good taste. And go with the skanky bug du jour instead.
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CRYSTAL DYNAMICS™
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BY	SEGA
RELEASE	APRIL
PRICE	£44.99
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP
PLAYERS	1

BREAK DOWN: ORIGINALITY, CHALLENGE, ACTION, STRATEGY, REFLEXES

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOYPAD
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
CONTINUES: TBC
SKILL LEVELS: 5
RESPONSIVENESS: EXCELLENT

ORIGIN
Coded by Andromeda, who created the ground-breaking original last year.

GAME AIM
Proceed through seven stages, chasing the ancient ship; confronting the forces of Mechannia; growing stronger.

BEAT THIS
345,000 (complete)

Even Emperors have unsettled nights. Penetrating the sleep of the undisputed Lord of all Mechannia is an eerie blue glow. This old, cruel, tyrranical man, mellowed not by age or learning has an ancient fear, a supersitution dredged out of his subconcious. His dynastic forefathers feared the same, a winged avenger arriving to visit devastation on the House of Mechannia. The light presages this event.
Far away, in the villages set on the edge of wilderness, mutant khourieats are vermin. The dumpy creatures have no use as domestic animals, and as such are to be killed whenever they are unfortunate enough to stray into villages. Inevitably, the young with their cuteish looks attract children who want them as pets. They should know the old traditions — the khourieats are bad omen.

The boy knew the tradition. But he hid the hatchling khourieat he found one day, as it appeared different to any he had seen before. He gave it a name, Lagi. He would sit in his hideaway, fascinated by the aura pulsing in its slender throat, but more than this, he wondered at the strange protrusions growing from its side. Lagi, like no other mutant khourieat before it, was developing wings. A year passes, and the boy has created his own makeshift tack for Lagi. He is convinced the headstrong creature can be yoked and ridden. He is convinced it can be made to fly. As he struggles with the creature on the ridge above his home valley, a strange vessel, riding the clouds, casts its shadow over the land. It's an emissary of death, the dark angel sent by an enfeebled but dangerous old man who wishes to extinguish a light that haunts him. But the light has just sprung to life...











SECOND SIGHT

PDZ retains the panoramic viewing system that allows you to view from the side and rear as well as to the fore. Gone are the multiple 'depth' perspectives of the first game that let you view your dragon from near, mid and far positions. However, the radar system displayed in the top-right corner has been updated. This shows your field of vision and all enemies within range. A new feature is the yellow zones which appear when enemies are potentially hostile and the red zones that indicate firing enemies. Larger enemies are marked as triangles on the scanner.



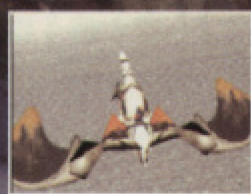
PANZER DRAGOON II ZWEI



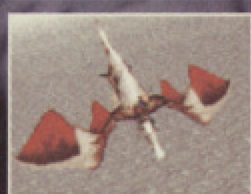
STRIVE HARDER BE BETTER

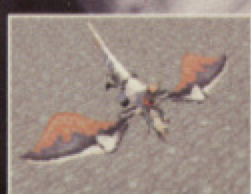
In PDZ the greater your efforts, the more spectacular your progress. Your dragon will evolve as you travel and his form is dictated by a tally of points awarded at the end of each episode. There are three categories of points; two completion points are awarded for finishing a level so these are effectively 'in the bag'. Technical points are granted if your performance throughout the level and on the boss warrants them, so practice is indeed beneficial. Finally route points are given if you choose (by accident or design) a more taxing path through the level. See the separate box on routeing. Scaling the hierarchy of dragons brings more than cosmetic satisfaction. You will find the dragons' sight become more responsive, their shots more powerful and their lasers able to track more targets, as well as being able to sustain more damage. More advanced dragons can make evasive movements or rolls.


ARMONITE


BRIGADEWING


HATCHLING

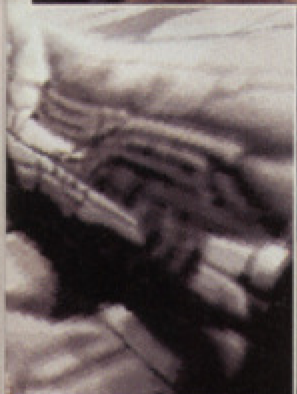

WINDRIDER


GLIDELING











MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

The first complete guide to Panzer's second adventure.

EPISODE 1

A brief, unchallening introductory level set in the home village. Lagi is earthbound and menaced by some of the remaining maurauders. Beasts of burden run wild in the confusion. A huge ship looms overhead and attempts to crush you, the last survivor of the carnage.













ROUTE 1

You are forced to breach the towering defences of Mechannia, whose seige trains and cannons are positioned high overhead. The Empire's great sailing ships are berthed here and protected by a huge fortified gun.

ROUTE 2

Lagi leaps into the void and has the strength to fly. His efforts attract Mechannia's airborne legions, with fighters, battle balloons and two huge sail frigates mounting an attack from all sides.

BOSS

Demolish the pride of Mechannia. A huge demonic airborne engine confronts you on a vast plain. Disable its cannons, rip its bomb cargo from its underbelly, smash its protruding missile limbs ar[illegible]ut it out of your misery.



EPISODE 3

Take flight into a dark and beautiful forest. Strange winged creatures fly alongside, little men fly triple-cannoned shuttles between tree trunks.

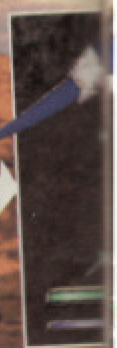


ROUTE 1

With wonder Lagi gains on some undulating centipede forms of vast size. No part is any weaker and each segment of their bodies must be blasted.





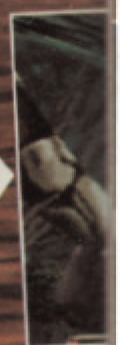


ROUTE 2

The shadow of a vast bat blocks the light and then it bursts through the foliage. This monster can absorb huge damage, while parasites drop off and launch their own attack. Twice this happens.







EPISODE 2

Wandering in the canyons that lead towards the Empire of Mechannia, you run the guantlet of its flying defences. A choice is made, and both ways lead to a huge rift valley. Lagi is forced to make a leap of faith and fly.







Motorised cannons are one of the game's strangest features. Each has a tiny operator.

VISIONARY

PDZ has a wider playfield than the original, with more freedom to move, and enemies appearing from a wider range of locations. The screen has more height, and this is put to most spectacular use in the scenes where the young dragon is running. From the ground position, moving the sight up and down manipulates the screen in a slightly different way than when flying. Looking up you get the effect on scenery, be it canyons, trees or caverns, towering over you. Episode two uses it to best effect.

BOSS

A monster defying description — a huge armoured, clawed lizard appears from the heart of the forest. It swings like an ape and pounces like a lion. Its hellish screams echo through the wood.









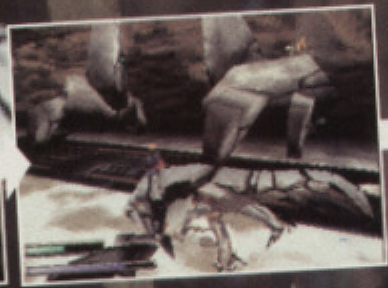
EPISODE 4

A secret long-sealed labyrinth of man-made caves. Disorientating choices to be made, with long-sleeping creatures out to entrap the first meal in a thousand years.

ROUTE 1

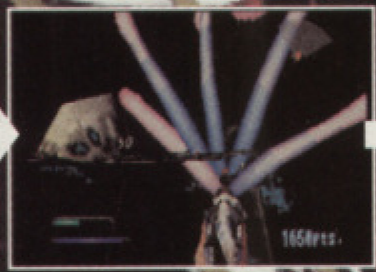
Tumbling down, dragon and rider come to a halt in a huge cathedral-like cavern. As they rise, malevolent eyes peer through the gloom. The guardians have awoken.




ROUTE 2

After heading down, you turn into a huge chimney leading you out to a huge aqueous arena. The lights fail, and amid flashes of illumination, you see a swarming mass of creatures churning the water.




ROUTE 3

Heading on, into curving corridors, you have to keep eyes in the back of your head. Many times squadrons will ambush you from behind, as the longest route twists on.











BOSS

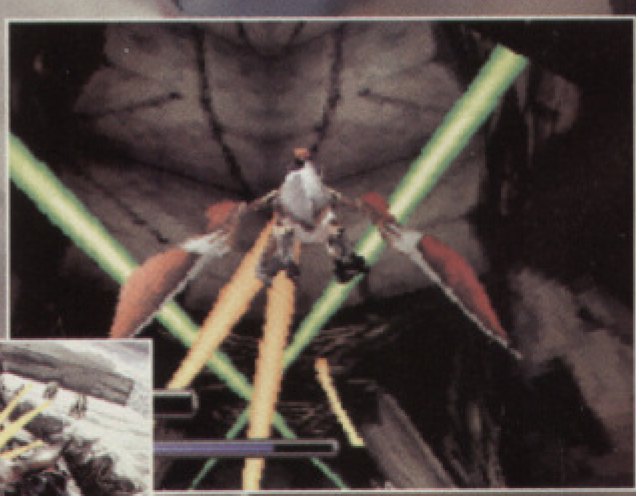
The path out of the vaults is a narrow stone causeway across a vast, dark Stygian lake. But the murky waters are home to a huge evil fish. There are few enemies as vicious as this creature, who attacks from all sides and by many different means.

SOUND OF THE ATOM SPLITTING

Panzer's new berserk mode is a previously unseen third weapon that acts effectively as a smart bomb. When activated, the dragon's lasers fire simultaneously, fanning out like lethal fingers to destroy everything within the vision field. The length of this is dictated by the level of the berserk mode bar, shown above the dragon's health bar. This can be slowly replenished by scoring hits on enemies.

EPISODE 6

The ancient ship at last is in reach, and its form dwarfs even the largest dragon. On its upper hull doors open to release flying escorts, as laser turrets stick like limpets to it. Inside the machine, you fly through a maze of honeycombed passages, emerging at the point where its vast paddle engines are fixed. Wreaking havoc on these, the final approach is along its ancient underside.



A canopy of laser-fire illuminates your journey through the heart of the machine.




EPISODE 5

The heroic pair emerge onto a frozen wasteland with snow falling around them. Huge bulbous creatures are flanked with crystalline enemies which crack through the ice. At one point, the form of the mysterious ancient ship appears through the gloom. As the blizzard clears, a vast ornithic boss hovers around the dragon, with its own laser-resistant shield.



Gyroscopic lilac lasers, as a climax to this trippy level.







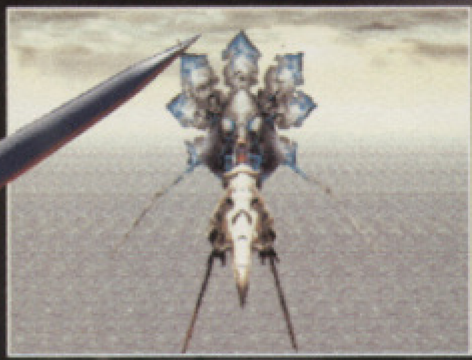
THE SHINING PATH

A major innovation in PDZ is route-choice, devised by Andromeda as a means of extending the game's longevity. On several of the levels, the route forks and positioning the dragon selects a path. Routes can differ wildly, one will always be more difficult than the other. Players will find the game considerably harder to complete by taking the more advanced routes. But there is a payback. Completing a level on the harder route results in route points, not offered for the easy path. These boost your chances of morphing into greater dragon forms.



EPISODE 7

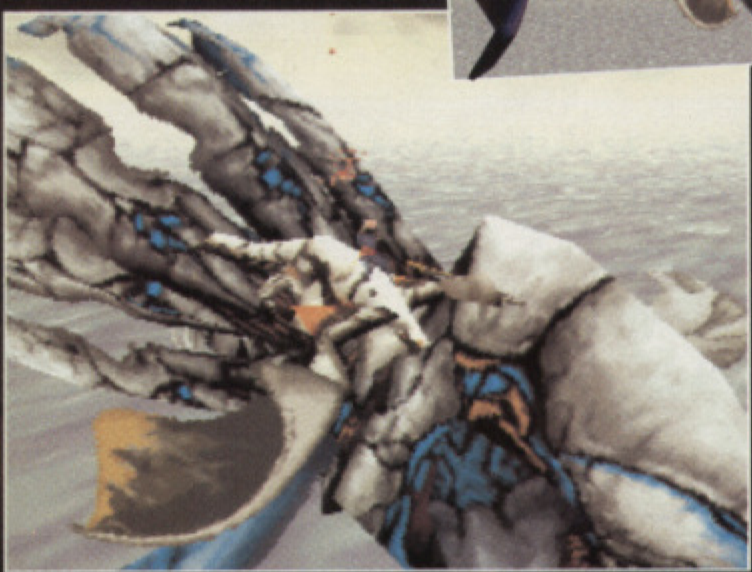
Its approach is quizzical at first, as if the appearance of the dragon sparks long distant memories. It is both hideous and beautiful at once. Despite its huge bulk, it can soar across the sky in an instant. It turns tail on the dragon and myriad, jewelled lethal stars explode across the sky. The final confrontation. Or is it?













The deadly has never looked so beautiful.

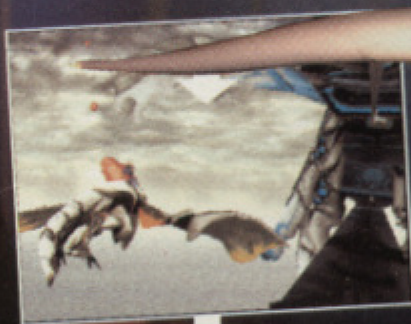




MUSICA NOVA

The stupendous music for PDZ is noteworthy for more than its atmospheric qualities. Andromeda's composers have been some of the few to utilise the Saturn's on-board Yamaha sound chip and generate the music real-time, rather than record them as individual CD tracks. As well as showcasing the chip's power (it's the most powerful piece of hardware in the machine) it offers a crucial advantage — in-game loading without breaks in the action.







WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

A crucial aspect to PDZ's long-term appeal is the Pandora's box option. We'll reveal its whereabouts and full contents next issue, but for now we'll just say it allows almost complete customisation of the game. Zero space is just one plaything contained within. This is a six-level target-shooting time trial challenging your reflexes with pop-up enemies. A nifty feature of Pandora's box is the way more and more features mysteriously crop up the longer you play.





COMMENT



GUS

The original Dragoon was the most exciting game for the Saturn when it debuted in Japan a year ago. Despite its shortcomings, it still shines. But this sequel is aeons ahead. PDZ is epic, dazzling, stirring and thrilling in equal measure. The ambigious plot of the original is expanded in a fantastic story intro that making it more of an adventure than an arcade game. But the story ends up offering more conundrums than those it solves. Quirky mystery is part of the PDZ experience as there is a whole culture of hidden features within the game, including an elaborate box of tricks offered as a 'reward' for good play. Graphically, it's far in advance of any shoot 'em up on any 32-bit format. Advanced polygon routines give a solidity, detail and smoothness to the backgrounds, and an artistic imagination has produced creatures nightmarish and stunningly beautiful in equal degree. Each level progressively astounds, especially the leviathan bosses which end each episode in a perilous confrontation. The last of these is so incredible as to be a defining moment in console gaming. Musically, the game's stunning appearance is matched byte for byte. The achievement is all the more impressive as it comes direct from the Saturn's soundchip. Developers in this country must strive to make use of this Yamaha-designed wonder, or Sega must provide an easy interface for it, as its neglect is, shown by PDZ, criminal. But it's too easy. Yes, the PAL version will be harder and the game has long-term interest, but still it's just too easy to play through. How can we still recommend a game that hardened players will complete in a few days? Because it's a must-have game. PDZ is simply the must-have game of spring '96.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Panzer Dragoon looked a treat, even if the gameplay soon palled through overfamiliarity. Panzer Dragoon Zwei is a significant step forward. We still have a game that can be admired for its breathtaking visuals, but Andromeda have done much to 'liberate' the player from the fixed routes and limited movement of the original. The cinematic feel is enhanced by greatly improved effects and sweeping panning shots. There are still problems – mainly that the game doesn't pose enough of a challenge – but perseverence has proved that completion of the game doesn't necessarily entail completion of the game. There is much here waiting to be discovered and, in true Hollywood fashion, the end is left wide open for a sequel. I can't wait.



GRAPHICS 96

▲A panoramic world of wonder, seamlessly displayed and brilliantly realised.

ANIMATION 94

▲The dragon movement, when inspected, is quite incredible. The aerodynamics of flight perfectly mapped.

MUSIC 95

▲Stunning ambient tracks and pounding accompaniements. A frenzy of mandolins, zithers, tribal drums and all generated realtime, not off CD!

EFFECTS 91

▲The gamut of science-fiction and horror plundered for explosions, blood-curdling screeches and bizarre effects.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲On every level all hell breaks loose, with every playing moment a compulsive joy. Living a boy's adventure tale.

LASTABILITY 86

▲A real effort has gone into providing come-back features.
▼At heart, it's still too easy.

OVERALL

Majestic and sweeping, visceral and stimulating to play, a title of mythic proportions.

92

WORK IN PROGRESS

PROJECT	GUNGRIFFON
PUBLISHER	SEGA JAPAN
INITIATED	JANUARY '95
RELEASE	SPRING
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	GAME ARTS

Your chance to get hopping mad with a sophisticated new combat runaraound – Marcus gets tanked up.

GUNGRI

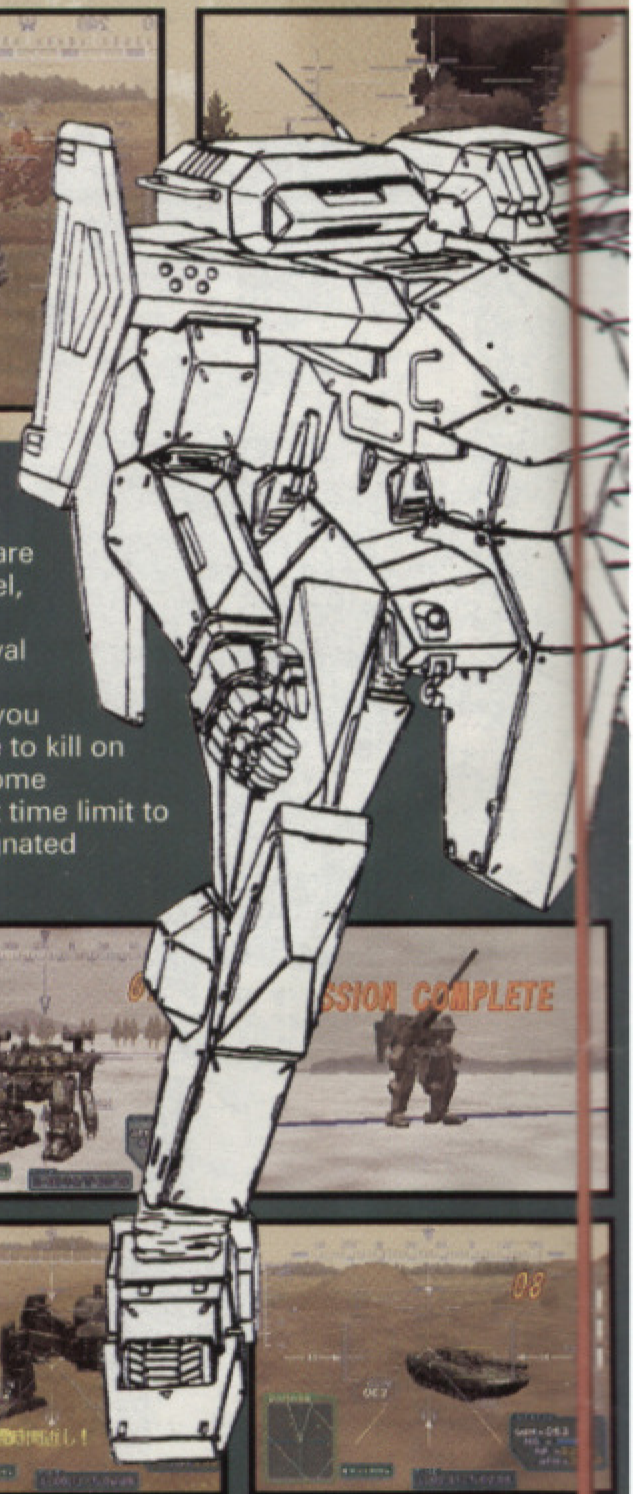
Mega CD owners with long memories may recall the impressive Silpheed. Well, Game Arts are back with a sophisticated first person perspective shoot 'em up, Gungriffon: The Eurasian Conflict. Optimistically scheduled for imminent Japanese release, the game is currently being considered by European publishers who would be wise to snap it up.

A bit of senseless slaughter always goes down well in the MEAN MACHINES office, and this is another twist on one of the all-time greats: Battlezone. However, instead of trundling around in a boring old tank you trundle around in a bizarre hopping armour suit bristling with all manner of lethal weaponry. If things get hairy, or if you just feel like gaining an aerial view of the battlefield, then you can even hover around for limited periods, strafing the ground from above or engaging helicopter gunships.

A variety of missions, testing your dexterity and accuracy across different terrains and different conditions, stretch your vehicle in the face of odds which, as the saying goes, are never anything other than "seemingly overwhelming". Which is all very well, but goes little way to explaining what the hell a griffon is...







PRACTICE MAKES...

In order to hone your skills before you enter combat proper, there are two training levels to potter about in. Scaled to easy or difficult level, the easy section drops your griffon into barren territory sparsely populated by enemy vehicles and a nasty boss in the shape of a rival griffon. The more difficult practise level drops your griffon into the middle of rolling pastures and charming woodland. Both of which you can destroy with your impressive array of weaponry. There is more to kill on this level, more aggressive opponents and two especially troublesome helicopter gunships to contend with. On both levels there is a strict time limit to adhere to – you must destroy all other vehicles and cross the designated boundary in the allotted time or the game is, very literally, up.

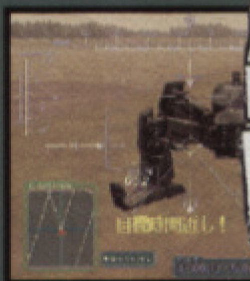


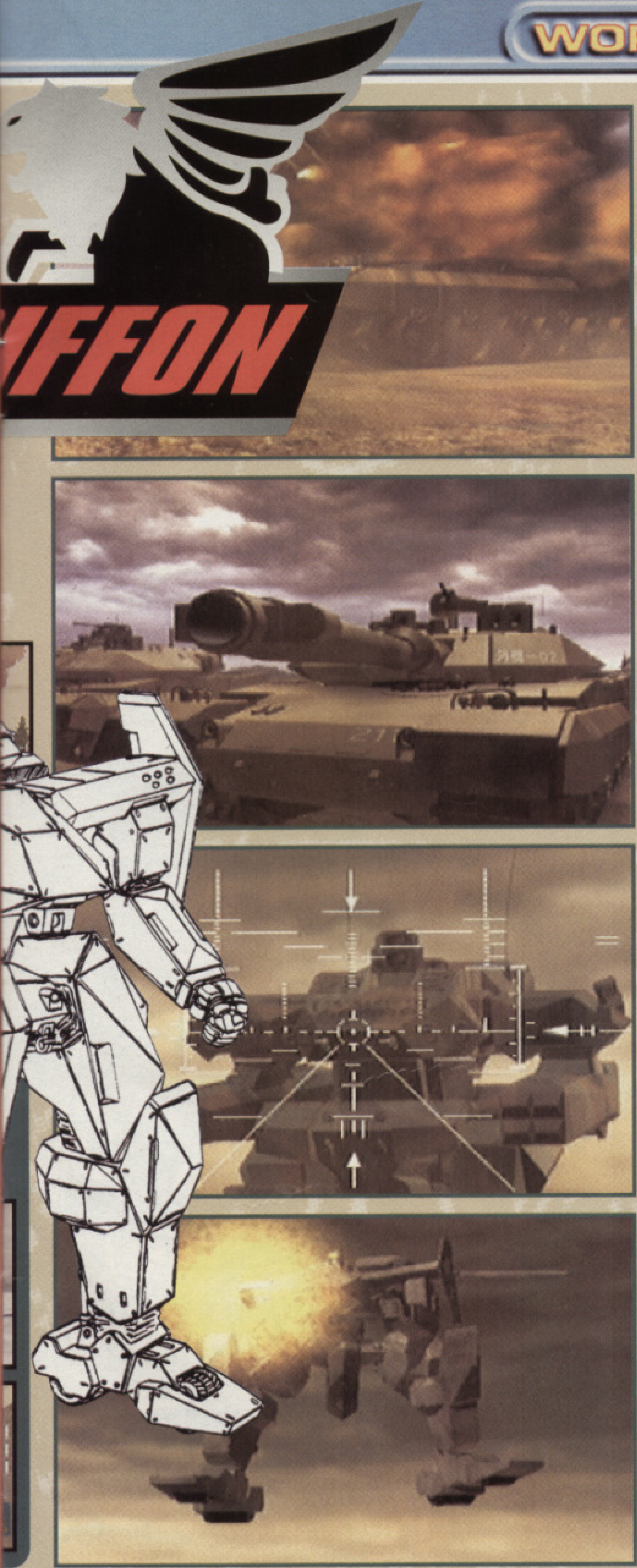






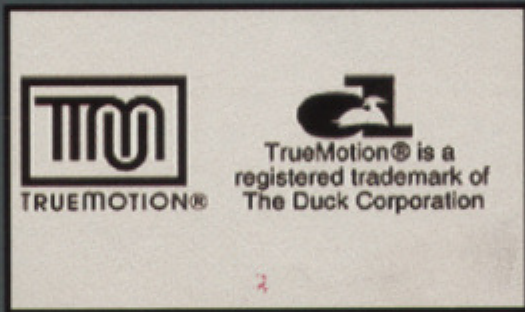






INTRO SEQUENCE

Gun Griffon has what can only be described as the most impressive intro sequence we've ever seen. The most sophisticated mechanised war machines the twentieth century has to offer are literally blown away by a descending squadron of gun griffons. Camera shake, gun recoil, explosions and dust trails are all lent unprecedented realism by the application of a new process called TrueMotion (tm) which elevates this above the standard of your usual run-of-the-mill FMV.











KHARKOV

The finished Gungriffon will feature eight levels in addition to the two training exercises, all set in wartorn Eastern Europe. The first of the four levels we were able to look at was set in Kharkov. Operation 'Dandelion Seed' shares the same objective as all the other levels as far as we can make out – shoot first and ask questions later.





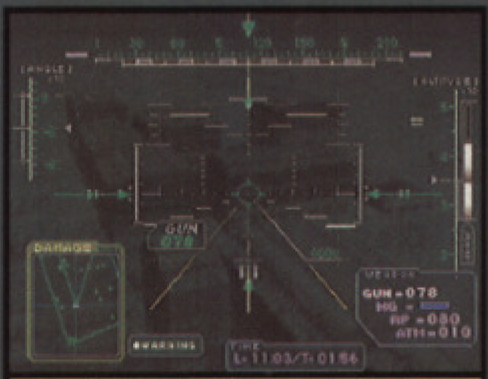
Enemy griffons are the targets most resilient to your weaponry.



Choose hover mode to take aerial pot-shots or engage the helicopter gunships.

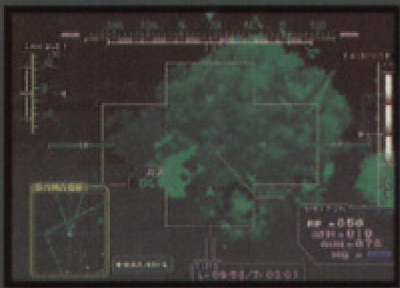
KIEV

No, not a yummie roast chicken served with garlic butter, but a particularly nail-biting setting for the second level. As its name suggests, Operation 'Dark Servant' is conducted in the pitch darkness of night, so you'll need your griffon's glowing green night sight to negotiate the rubble and tight corners in the city, as well as to spot any approaching enemies.



An aerial view of the war-torn city – such surveys are essential for navigating the narrow streets.





NOVOSIBURSK

Appalling weather conditions in the snowy wastes of Novosibursk hamper Operation 'Foxhunt'. Separating friend from foe and locating enemy craft relying mainly on your on-board radar is difficult – hostiles tending to loom at you through the fog when it's too late. Your ability to spend limited time hovering over the action (the multi-sectioned bar at the side of the screen indicates how many 'hovers' you can initiate at any one time) is of less use here than on other levels.







I think that one missed.



A close-range pummelling – typical tactics on this fog-shrouded level.

ULAN BATOL

The terrain is the only hospitable aspect of Operation 'Bloodstorm' - a level that introduces some persistent and well-armed opponents in the most easterly location in the Eurasion Conflict – Ulan Batol. Most dangerous of all here is the black 'mega griffon' – a vehicle that pits you against an opponent with all your own agility and firepower.



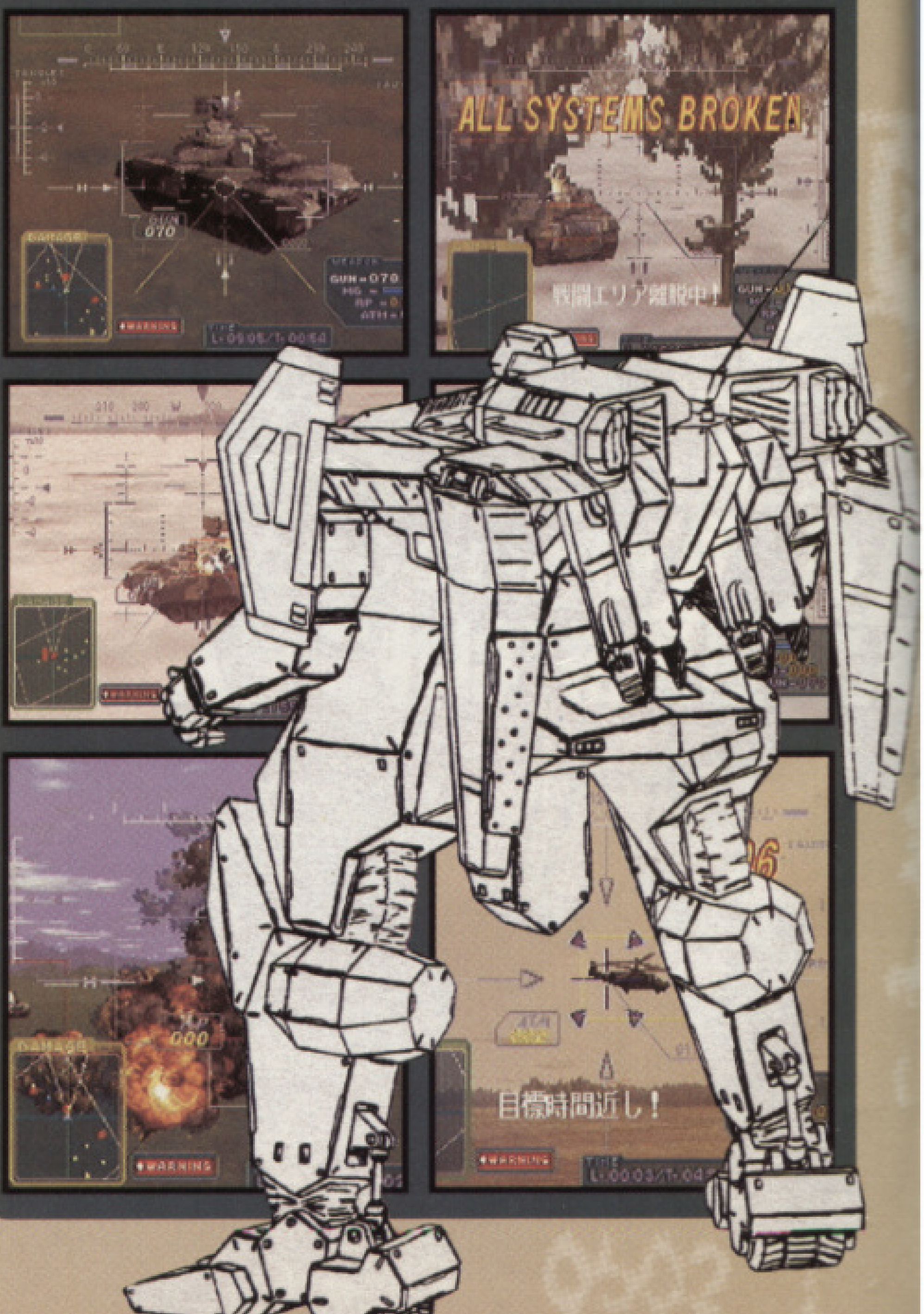
These six-legged beasties are on your side, and provide valuable cover when you're being shelled.



Cripes – I think he's seen you.



This chap's got a serious attitude problem, and takes a decidely confrontational stance.




PLAY THE GAME.
Disney's
TOY STORY
Disney Interactive
SEGA the GAME IS NEVER Over.
MEGADRIVE
TOY STORY. FROM THE BIG SCREEN TO THE MEGADRIVE. BUT IS IT STILL A HAPPY ENDING? ONLY IF YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH.
© Disney

PROJECT
KING OF THE FIGHTERS

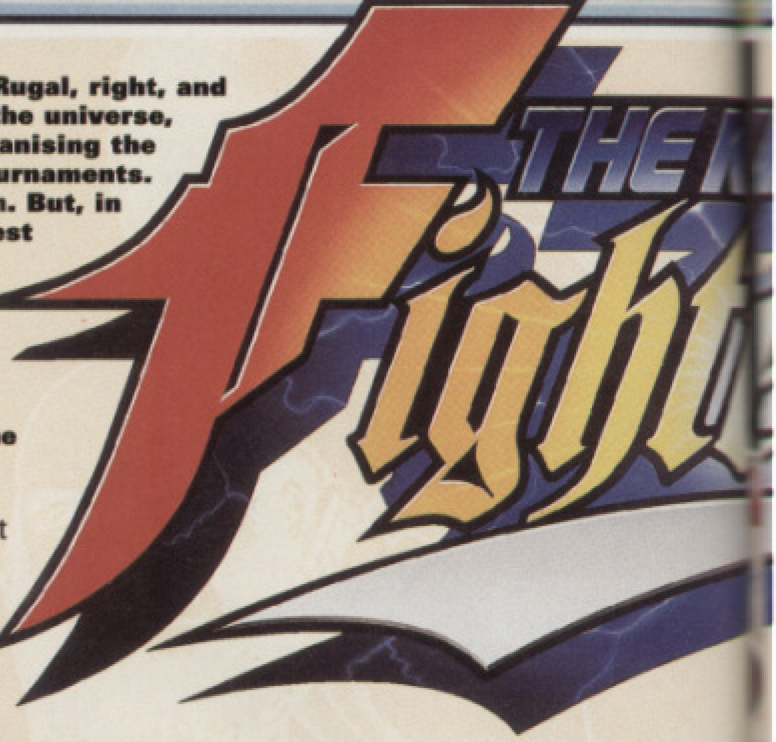
PUBLISHER
TBA

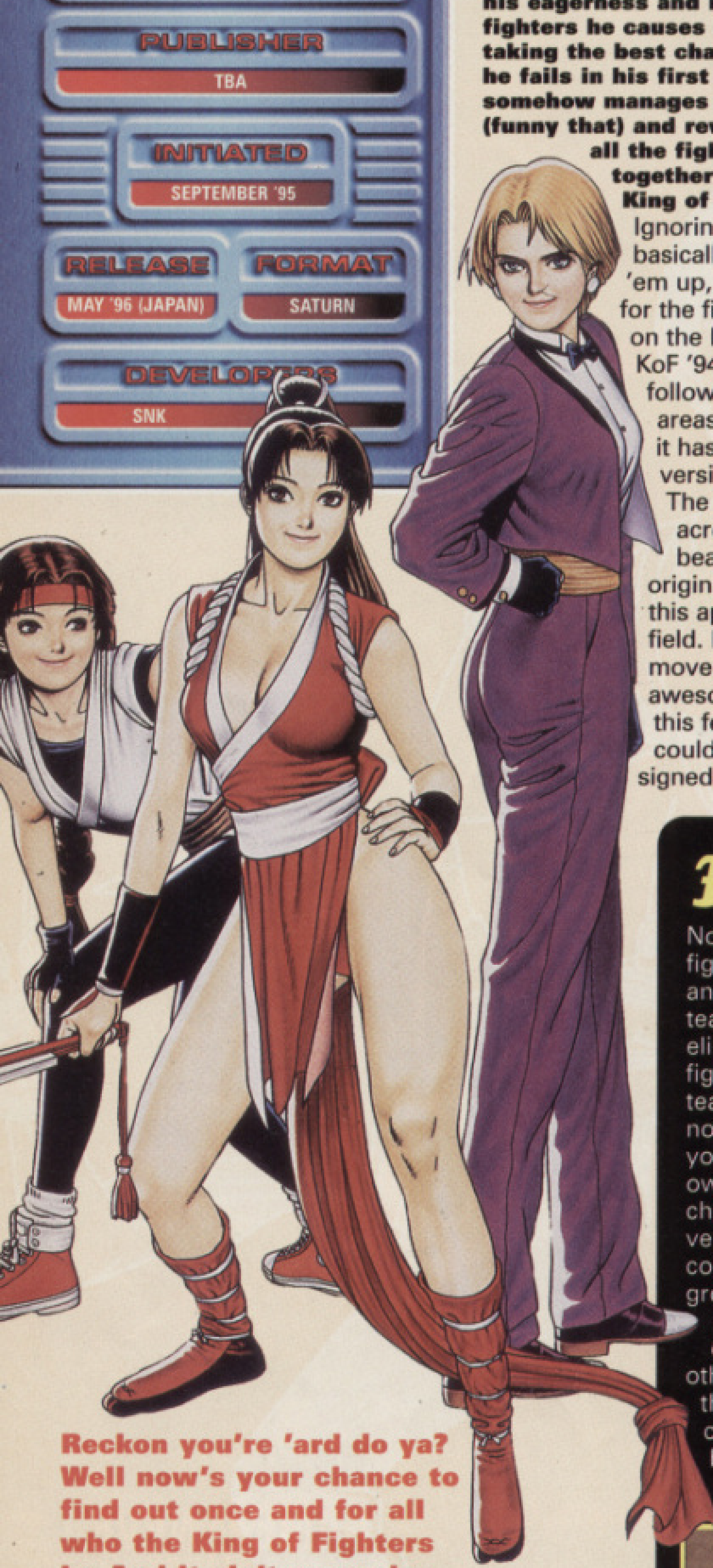
INITIATED
SEPTEMBER '95

RELEASE
MAY '96 (JAPAN)

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
SNK





So there's this master fighter called Rugal, right, and seeing as he's the hardest bloke in the universe, he wants to test his strength by organising the one-on-one tournament to end all tournaments. Thus the King of the Fighters is born. But, in his eagerness and his desire to destroy the best fighters he causes his mothership to explode, taking the best challengers with him. So, he fails in his first attempt, but somehow manages to survive the crash (funny that) and revives the tournament. So all the fighters have gathered back together in another quest to become King of the Fighters.

Ignoring the ultra-realistic plot, this basically boils down to another beat 'em up, attempting to challenge SF for the fighting crown. It premiered on the Neo Geo in the form of KoF '94, and this upgrade soon followed to high aplomb in certain areas of the gaming press. Now, it has arrived on the Saturn, in the guise of the latter version, to wow all you Saturn owners.

The format is the same as all the fighting games you come across, with one bloke or woman trying desperately to beat up another bloke or woman. Zero points for originality. But it's the style of the game that may help to set this apart from the other games in the already overcrowded field. It has a very anime feel to it, with very stylish character movements and appearances. An added bonus is an awesome multi-player mode, which is detailed elsewhere in this feature. If early indications are anything to go by, it could cause quite a stir. But, with no European publisher yet signed, it might not see the light of day on these shores.



FANCY A THREESOME?

No you perverts, not that sort of threesome. We mean a bit of three-on-three fighting action. This game has a Team mode option in which you can choose any one of three characters to team up together in an elimination-style battle. The fighters are already grouped into teams when you start, but you now have the opportunity to pick your own specific set of warriors for your own specific needs. With 24 characters to choose from, a veritable feast of possible combinations are on offer. The groups are built around past games and alliances with other characters from SNK's other beat 'em ups. For instance, there is a Fatal Fury side consisting of the Bogard brothers and Joe Higashi, and numerous other stowaways from the Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting games.



One of your mates is getting whipped by a bloke with a pole and all the other two blokes in the back can do is watch. Brown pants.

Reckon you're 'ard do ya? Well now's your chance to find out once and for all who the King of Fighters is. And it ain't gonna be pretty...







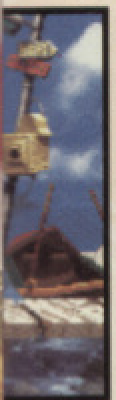
ING OF ...ers' 95





TWO IN ONE, LIMITED OFFER!

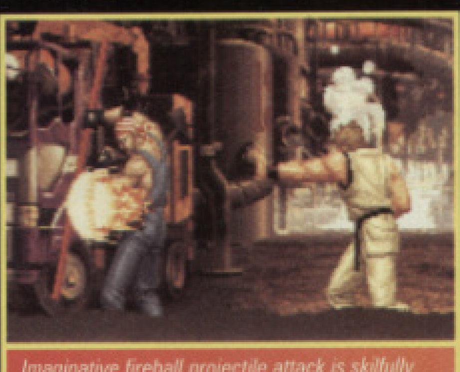
SNK have developed what they call the innovative "Dual ROM system." Eh? Dual ROM means cartridge and CD in one. A 16 MB Rom cartridge (a standard Megadrive cart) is going to be bundled with the game, to store all of the complex backgrounds. Basically, the cart fits into the Saturn's memory slot and prevents potential loading time problems by storing all of the backgrounds in ROM chips, bringing them into the game when necessary. This leaves the CD free to load all the other game info. Now I know what you're thinking: What about the astronomical cost? Well, actually there isn't one. The game is due to cost around 7,800 Yen (around £60) for both the cart and the CD. If you consider that that is only 1,000 Yen (around £8) more than VF2, and 2,000 yen more than the predicted price for N64 carts, it doesn't seem unreasonable.



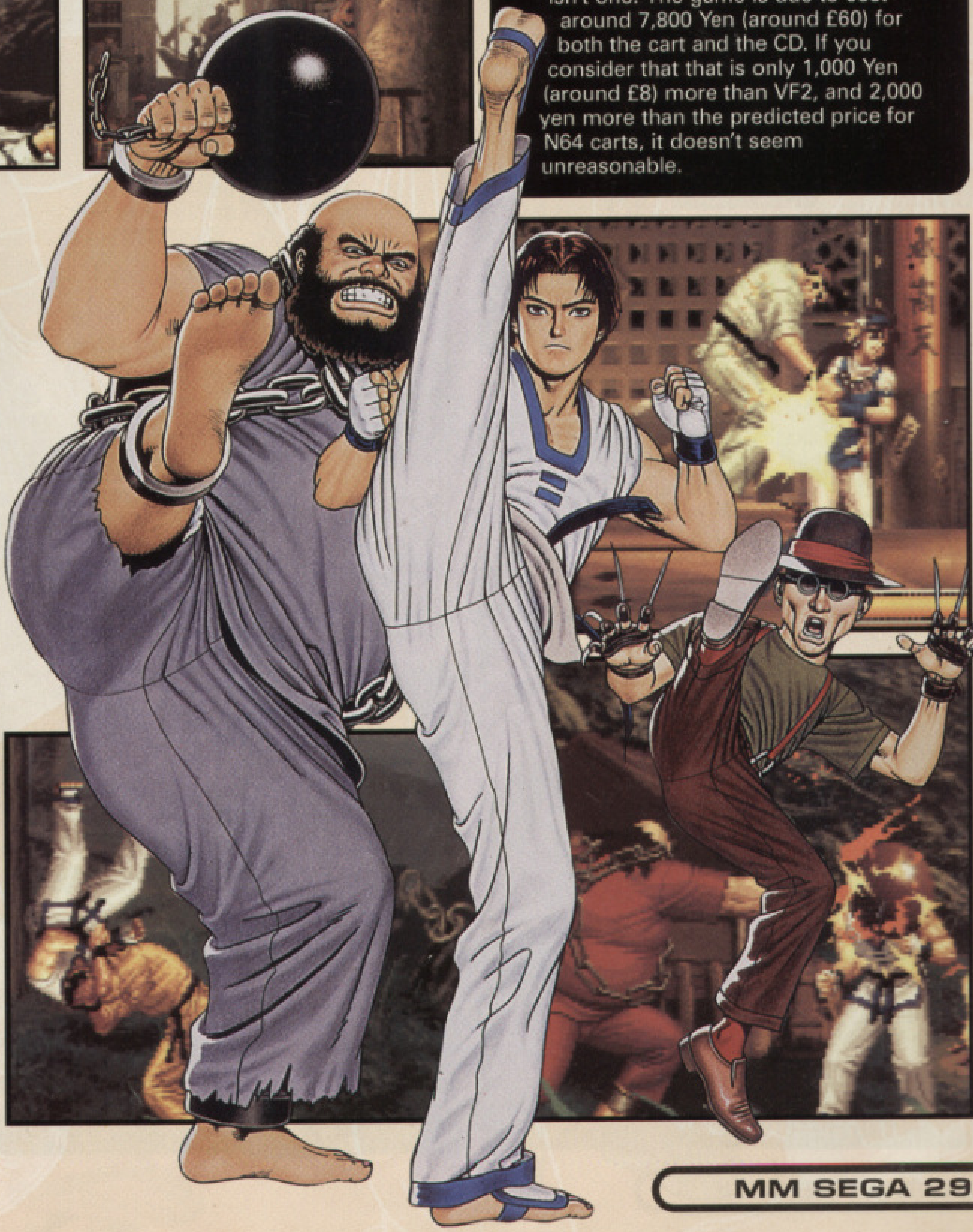


JAMMY DODGER

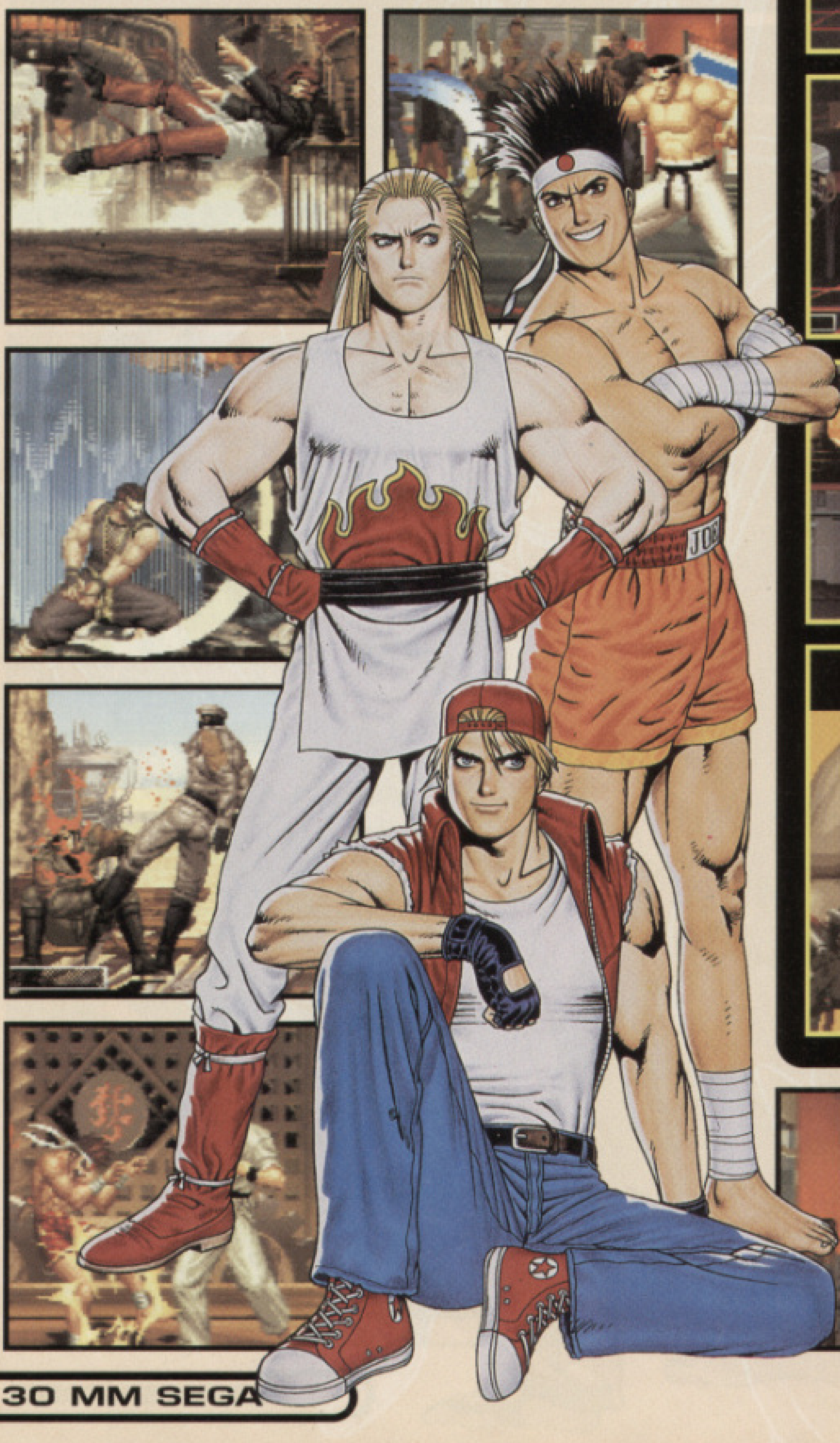
Blocking is a standard tactic for all beat 'em ups, but this game also has a dodge move that can enable you to bypass fireballs without sustaining any damage. By simply pressing Z button, your character will dip into the background for a split second before returning to the foreground to continue with the fight. Timing is essential, because if you dodge too soon, then the fireball will strike when you're unable to block. If timed to perfection, other non-projectile attacks can be avoided but this takes many more precision button presses.



Imaginative fireball projectile attack is skilfully avoided by a sidestep, and a footshuffle to halt any combination chance. Maximum caption over.





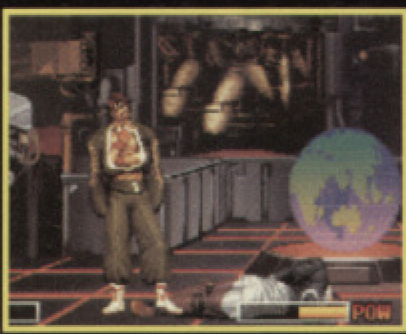


ALWIGHT BOSS

The standard 24 characters are not the only blokes and blokettes who you can control in the game. When you manage to beat all of the other fighters, you move onto the spaceship home of the first boss: The SkyMother. The first boss is Saisyu Kusanagi who is a martial arts character, and the father of Kyo, one of the other fighters in the game. He is immensely powerful for an old bloke, and possess a stunning finish if you get near to beating him. However, if you defeat him in one round, Omega Rugal takes his place, and an even greater foe awaits you. Rumour has it that they are also playable with a cheat, but nothing is confirmed yet...

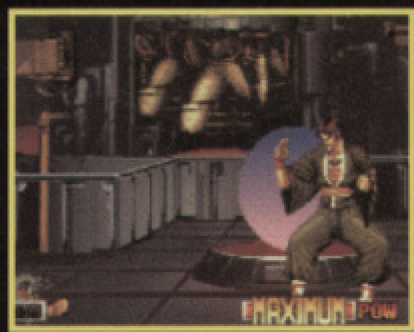


















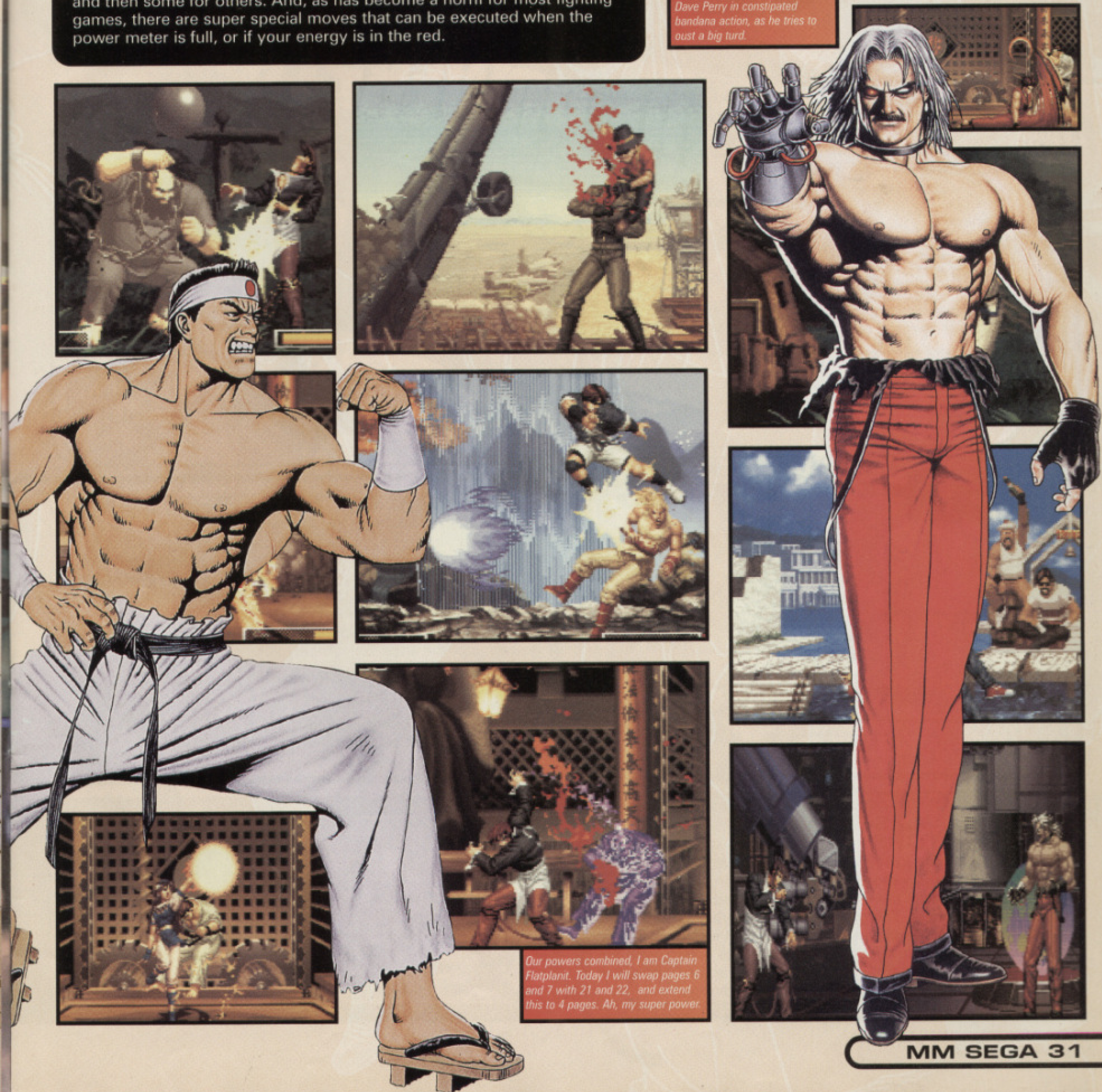


BLAST FROM THE PAST

The KoF '94 version featured all but three of these characters. Billy Kane, Eiji Kisagari and Iori Yagami are the newcomers who replaced the original American team. Also, the SNK boys have managed to add at least one special move for each character and then some for others. And, as has become a norm for most fighting games, there are super special moves that can be executed when the power meter is full, or if your energy is in the red.



Dave Perry in constipated bandana action, as he tries to oust a big turd.



Our powers combined, I am Captain Flatplanit. Today I will swap pages 6 and 7 with 21 and 22, and extend this to 4 pages. Ah, my super power.

PROJECT
NHL POWERPLAY

PUBLISHER
VIRGIN

INITIATED
NOVEMBER '95

RELEASE
JUNE '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
RADICAL

Let's be realistic here. What exactly has Ice Hockey done for our fine nation? It prompted EA to release the superb EA Hockey, and it gives Eamon Holmes a few funny clips on Oddballs when everybody gets into a massive pile-up. Other than that, hockey is not exactly regarded as the greatest of games is it? I mean, anything that Eurosport puts on at one in the morning as a time-filler must be good, eh?

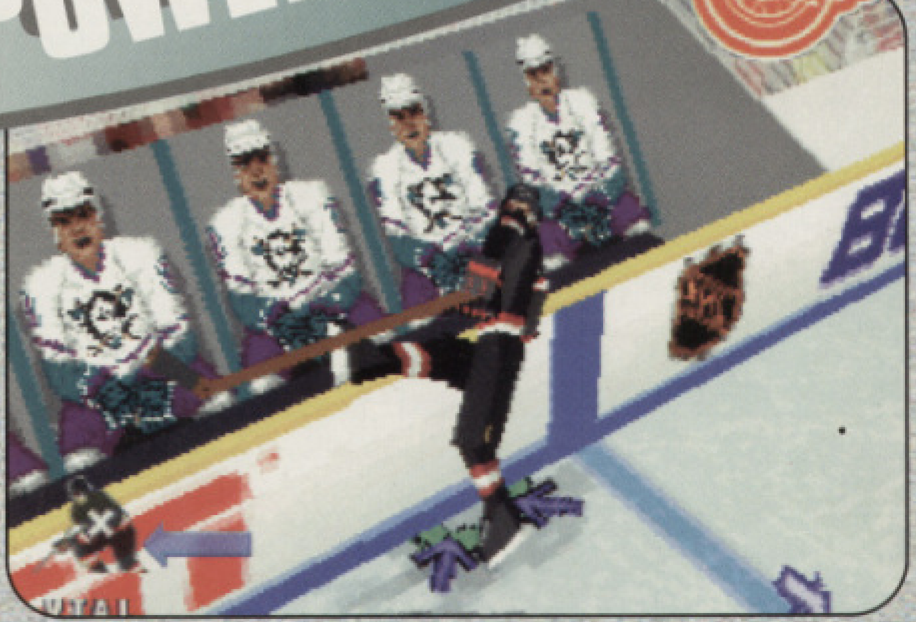
But, as briefly hinted at before, whatever is said about this ice, sticks and pucks runaround, one thing it does make for is an excellent gaming experience. Take EA's NHL Hockey. Probably one of the finest sports games ever to appear on any Sega machine. So it's no real surprise that Virgin have decided to throw their considerable weight into the market with their version of events – namely NHL Powerplay Hockey.

With the only other Saturn Ice Hockey sim being the slightly poor NHL All Star Hockey, it doesn't exactly have much to live up to. Which makes this release even more important, as it could well be seen as a benchmark for future games. But what will probably set this apart from other Hockey games will be its level of realism. The player movements and the animation are all top notch, and represent a lot of hard work on the programmers' part.

We'll give it the MEAN MACHINES review treatment in a forthcoming issue.

NHL POWERPLAY '96





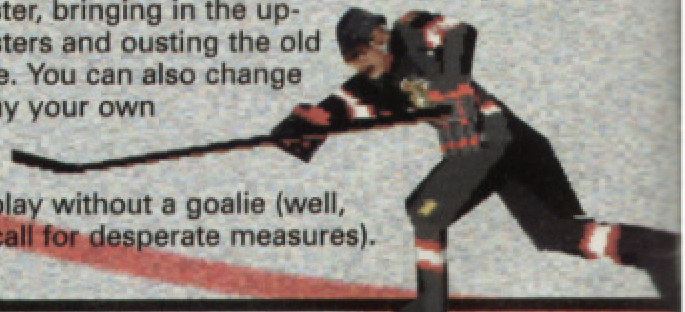


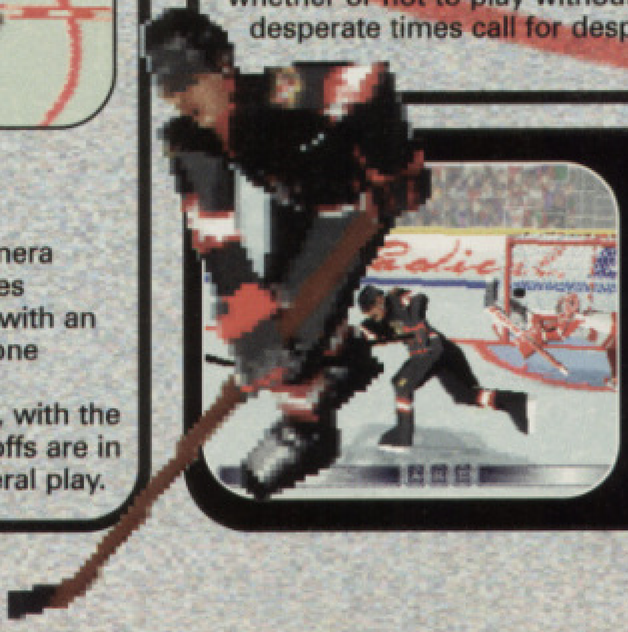
MORE ANGLES THAN PROTRACTORS

As you should all be expecting by now, the virtual camera views that accompany most of the Saturn sports games nowadays have made the transition to this game, but with an unprecedented effect. The game stays in the view of one camera whilst you are playing and zooms and rotates accordingly. This gives a far greater feel for the action, with the view zooming in when goalmouth scrambles or face-offs are in process, and panning out again during the more general play.

POSITION OF THE FORTNIGHT

The game features the ability to change the team you have selected to play, until you can have the best players possible. Before games, the option to coach the team is available, enabling them to be a little more clued up on any set plays you may wish to execute, and you can also change the complete player roster, bringing in the up-and-coming youngsters and ousting the old grandads of the side. You can also change tactics to accompany your own defensive/attacking style, and decide whether or not to play without a goalie (well, desperate times call for desperate measures).













Just don't ask what the other goalie is called. Call him Richard.



READY TO RUMBLE

Every ice hockey game needs to have a fight sequence of some form or another, and although we didn't actually find a full-blooded scrap when we played this, what we did find were some really sly and devious tactics that could be used to take out the opposition. If you want to get your own back on your opponents for scoring a goal, then this game lets you do that. By simply skating over to them as they are celebrating and hitting a few buttons, sticks are used to good effect in swiping their legs and socking them round the head. You can also push the player with the puck, off the ball, causing them to fly legs akimbo across the ice *a la* Bambi. Excellent.

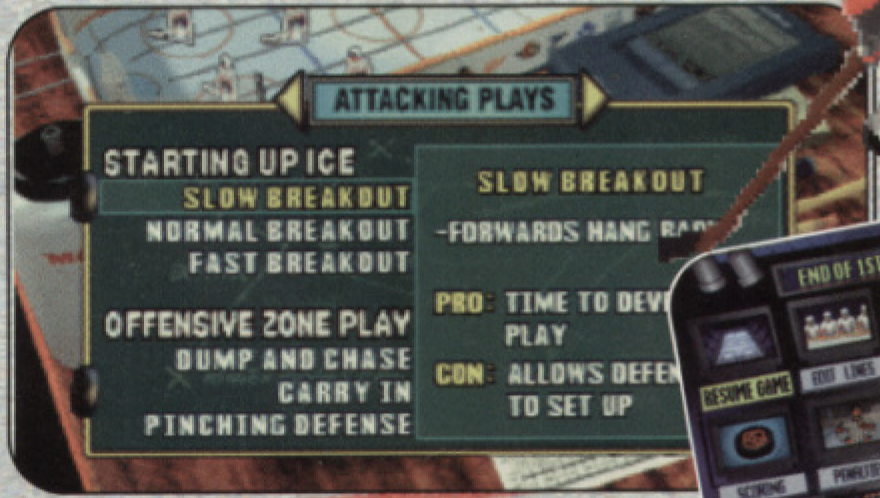


The Ice Hockey Free Fall teams' pre game entertainment goes horribly wrong. Kids, look away.





Wahey! Our friend Bonk makes his second appearance of the page. Needless to say, he bought his friend H. Panky too. When quizzed about his pre-sporting achievements, all he said was "How's your father?" Funny bloke.













PROJECT
DARK SAVIOR

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
APRIL '95

RELEASE
JUNE '96

FORMAT
SATURN

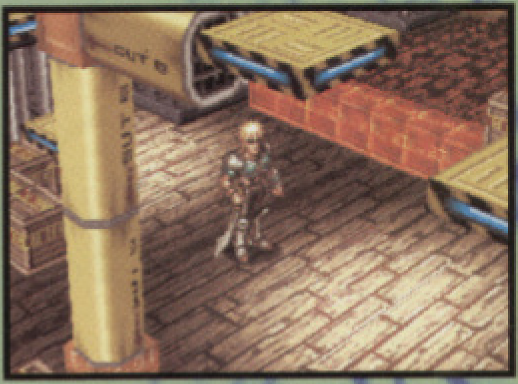
DEVELOPERS
CLIMAX

DARK SAVIOR

As 1996 progresses, the attention being paid to Kan Naito's Climax developers and his pet project, Dark Savior, is increasing. Both Sega Japan and Sega UK want this game. In Japan, RPGs are of huge commercial importance: games like Riglord Saga and Rayearth have done as much to win the war against the Playstation as the AM conversions. Here, the benefits of having Dark Savior onside are less obvious. But as it's shaping up to be a unique effort — there are no comparable projects for either Saturn or Playstation — and it has a high priority.

There must be a certain amount of 'chagrin', therefore, with the delays that now seem to have hit the release. They aren't expected to be massive — the game should be out in Japan in June instead of April, but it's one of those games that are hard to wait for. The extra time is being put into design and playability, as most of the graphics are in place. Our instinct is that Climax want the game to be more 'platformey' before its completion. English translation should follow almost immediately.

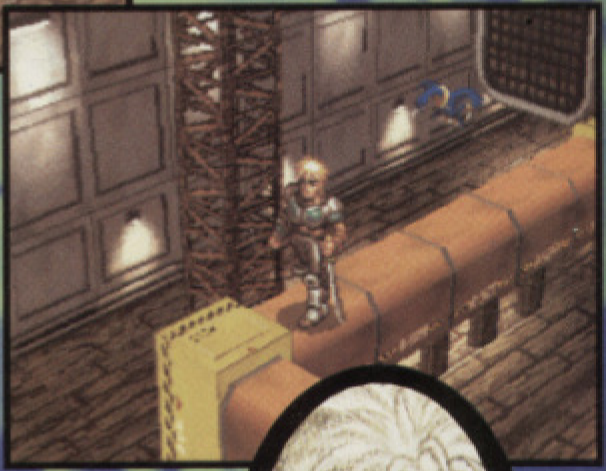
To make the going easy, Climax have released a demo disc containing a fully-functional level, the scene-setting ship level. This gives a useful insight into game feel and interface as well as ably demonstrating the 'Hyperion perspective' which rotates and scales the game in 3-D.



ANGLE POISE

Dark Savior's world is constructed as a 3-D grid with sprites surfaces mapped onto these. The range of textures is huge and includes metallic, light-sourced and transparency effects (shown here by flame effects). The revolutionary aspect is the freedom offered to scale and rotate this view using the top 'shoulder' and Y/Z buttons. Movement in three planes is possible, shown by the sequence. The utility is not just cosmetic, as the isometric graphics will often leave you in a position behind objects, which is fixed by changing the perspective.


Look at the two characters on the right. I might be mistaken, but has she, in a very sly manner, reached under his arm and started to tickle one of his nipples? Begs the question, why?

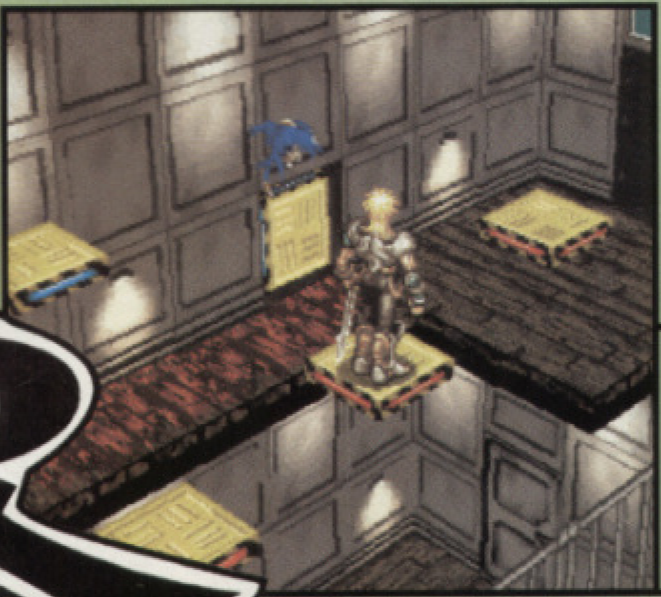



WHAT'S THE STORY?

Climax games are famed for having great stories. The Landstalker plot was full of the regular swords and sorcery gubbins but with enough twists and humorous moments to lift it above most RPGs. Dark Savior is set to capitalise on Climax's story-telling strengths, but with improved 3-D presentation. One good feature is that the designers have chosen to tell the story in realtime graphics exactly the same as those within the game rather than concoct rendered or FMV scenes. Early examples show the ship's crew gossiping about the strange cargo, a creature being lowered into the hold and escaping, showing no mercy to a sailor guard — his demise casts as a shadow scene onto the wall.



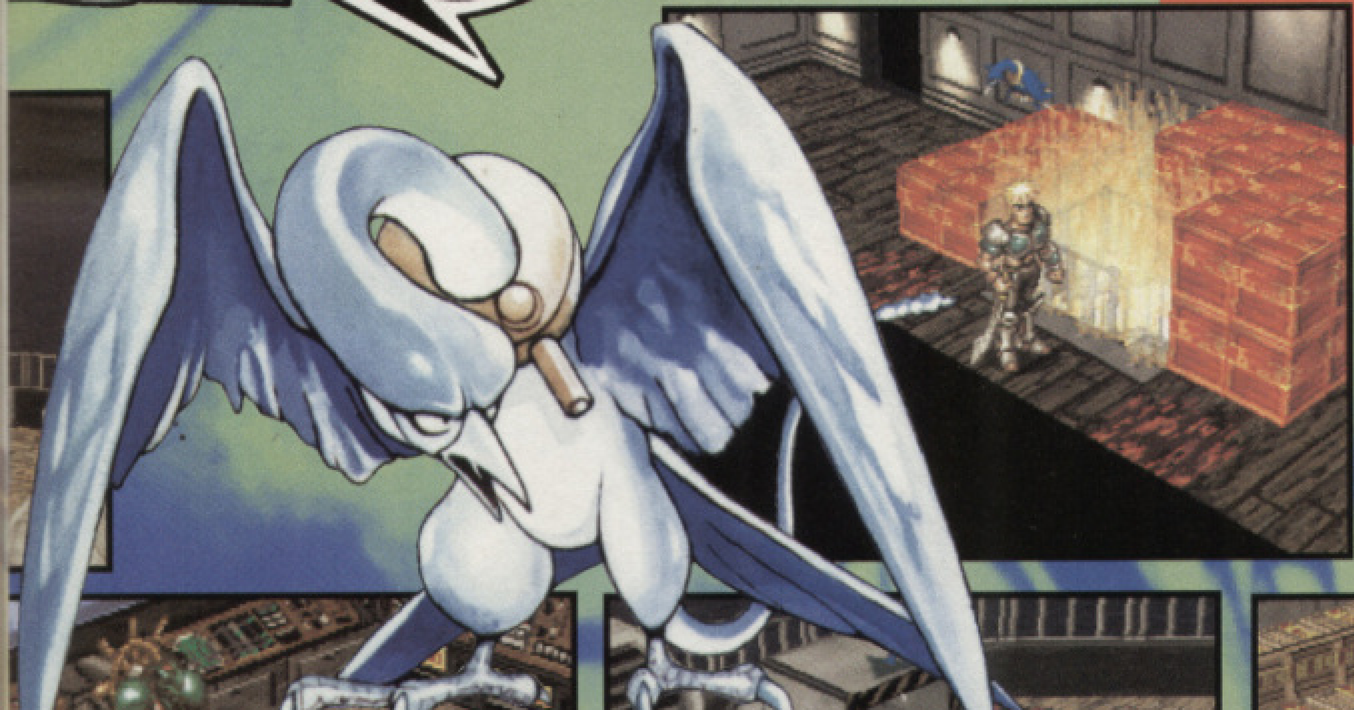
MEAN MACHINES 'discovered' Dark Savior when in Japan, and now we have the most up to date version of this eye-popping RPG.



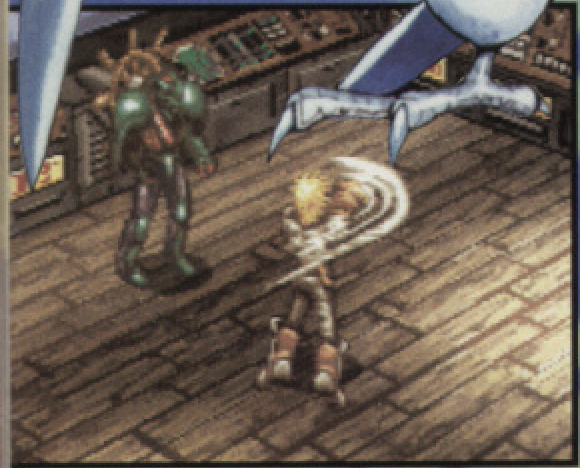
The floating cheese waffles from hell have nabbed our hero, in a quest to end all Waffly Versatile adverts.

GUTS INSTINCT

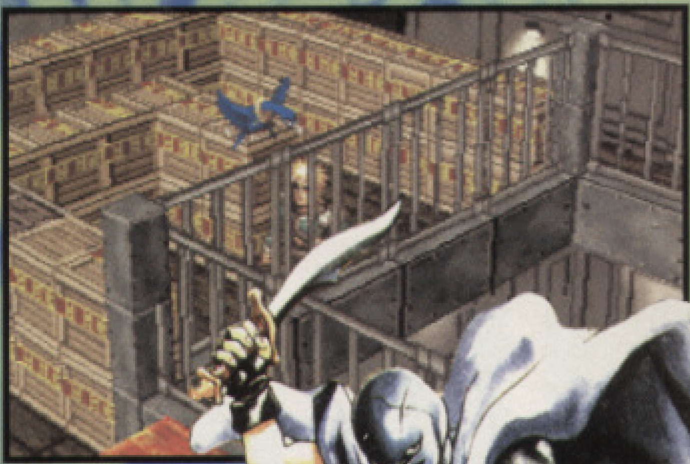
Confrontations play a large part in the problem-solving. Dark Savior has its first boss creature, which you face in a best-of-three standoff on the ship's bridge. Whether by accident or satirical design, the programmers have used a Capcom style 'vs' pre-fight screen styling. Further weapons and attack moves exist throughout the game.



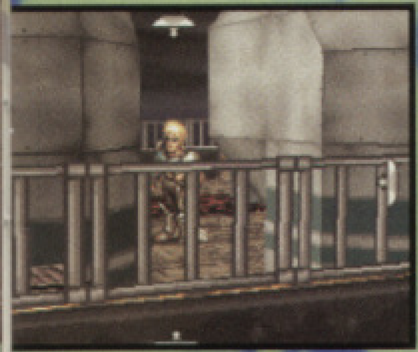


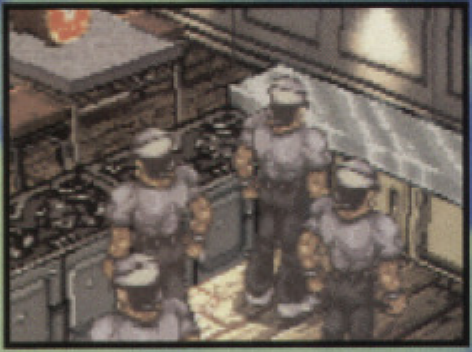


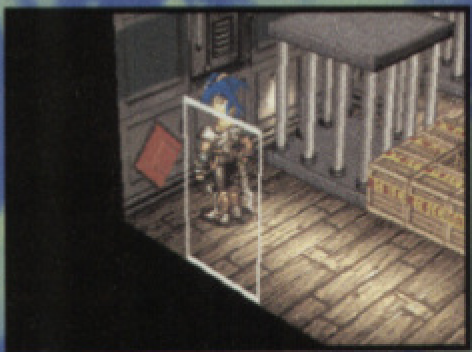




















BY: CAPCOM

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: MAY 1996

COMPLETE



And the new Capcom game is... a beat 'em up! The Japanese software giant is not winning any originality awards, on Saturn at least, but in truth they are just catching up with their arcade back catalogue. When we spoke to Capcom in December and brought you the very first pictures of Darkstalkers, they spoke of their belief in the Saturn owner as a devotee of arcade games (beat 'em ups especially) and their intention to convert the coin-ops of 1995.

And within three months that is what they've done, with their UK affiliates struggling to keep up with their prolific combat game output. X-Men, Streetfighter Alpha and now Vampire Hunter arriving like a proverbial trio of buses.

Vampire Hunter began life as the Darkstalkers coin-op of late 1994. The impetus behind the project was Capcom designers' wish to create a horror game that used worldwide monster myths to empower the characters. The game hasn't attracted the same kind of following as Streetfighter II, and the nominal sequel (and subject of this conversion) Vampire Hunter followed. It's essentially a tweaked version of Darkstalkers, with two extra player characters; Donovan and Lei Lei, two boss characters selectable as player characters; Pyron and Phobos and many more moves and animations.

As far as Saturn versions go, it looks more sophisticated than either X-Men or Streetfighter Alpha, with sharper sprites and backdrops, greater background animation and smoother animation. The arcade's attract sequence is also there. It's also Capcom's most recent coin-op conversion. Virgin have the contract to release Vampire Hunter in Europe, but when they will is still unconfirmed. One matter that needs to be resolved is that Virgin are already sitting on the brilliant Streetfighter Alpha (see review this issue) and it would be unlikely for them to release two similar games so closely. Vampire Hunter will be worth waiting for.



CHAIN GANG

One of Vampire Hunter's combo features is chain hits. These come about by using fast combo sequences of different strength attacks. For example, a light punch followed by medium punch then light punch would qualify for a three-hit chain. Some characters' attacks work better for these combo types. In addition to this multi-hit combos for special attacks and EX attacks are calculated.







HANDMADE

Capcom have a reputation for producing the best drawn characters and artwork in video games. The still pictures used in Vampire Hunters are some of the best, with the traditional skills of figure drawing translated into vibrant, high-resolution images.







BELLS AND WHISTLES

Vampire Hunter has the same well-furnished front end as other Capcom games, which demonstrate their attention to detail. It also has the unwelcome side-effect of making the games look a bit samey. Nevertheless, Vampire Hunter has the useful features of turbo-speed (variable turbo settings), eight difficulty settings, auto-blocking and a VS mode which tabulates the successive matches of human opponents.

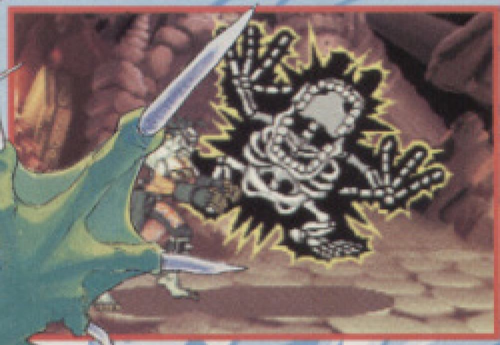


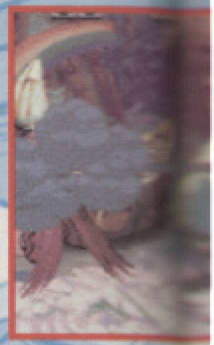












POWERS OF DARKNESS

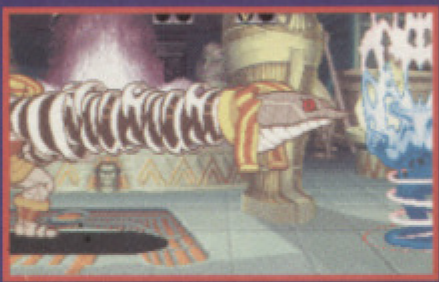
Vampire Hunter features the most complex arrangement of special moves of any Capcom beat 'em up, with the chance to customise and adapt attacks as you wish.

Attacks come in one of three basic forms:



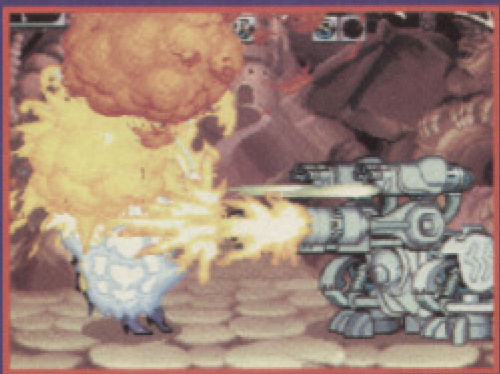
'ES MOVES'

These special moves are the equivalent of fireballs and dragon punches familiar to players of other Capcom games. To widen the range of moves per character, there are variations on many of these throws according to whether the player is close to the opponent; in the air; or if certain strengths of either punch or kick are used. Some ES moves have follow-up attacks. A good example is Bishamon's sword attack, where the first ES move plants a sword in his opponent and the follow-up attack has Bishamon running him through with it.



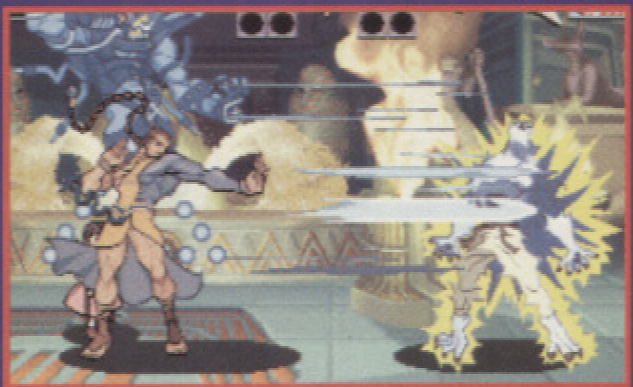
'SPECIAL ES MOVES'

Most characters will have a couple of 'ES' moves which can be powered up using the character's power bar energy. This bar is filled each time a move is performed or an attack is blocked. A special ES move is performed by pressing all three punch or kick buttons instead of the usual one. The character will flash colours as he/she performs.



'EX MOVES'

Each character has between one and three most powerful attacks that consume a full level of their power bar at a time. EX moves are the ones to employ for the highly satisfying 'extra special finish'. However, most EX moves are less complicated to perform than X-Men or Alpha moves, so you'll be able to employ them in the course of normal combat, with them less likely to end the round prematurely. Some 'EX' moves show distinctly MK style tendencies, with actions performed using a sequence of button and direction presses.









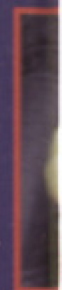














MULTI-TONAL

One example of the detail present is the choice of up to eight colour schemes for the characters, simply by using a different joypad button to select the character. All the attacks are also colour coded.











GHOULISH HUMOUR

Ignore the horror theme, the game designers had a bizarre sense of humour which works its way into some, frankly silly, special attacks. We've assembled a top five of kooky killings.



5

ANAKARIS: PHARAOH MAGIC

The sucking-lifeforce bit is reasonable, but the falling Sarcophagus that follows is a bit Pythonesque.



4

LEI LEI: TON WEIGHT

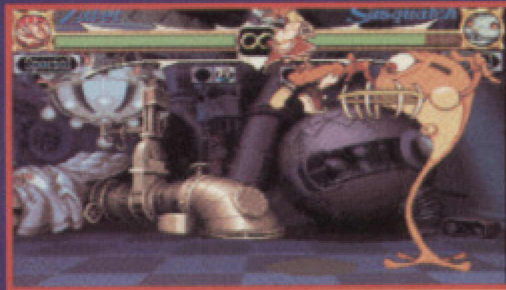
Inexplicably, Lei Lei produces a large stage weight which shakes the ground, and her opponent into submission. A rather theatrical and frankly suspect way of ending the round.



3

DONOVAN: OLYMPIAN STOMP

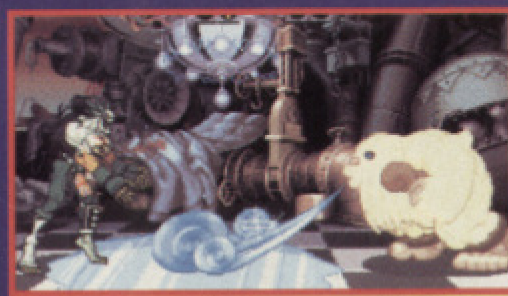
Vampire Hunter meets Clash of the Titans-type excess when a vast winged flip-flop descends from the heavens to crush your opponent to mush. Sadly no Terry Gilliam-esque farting sound effect.



2

ZABEL: MONSTER DUNK

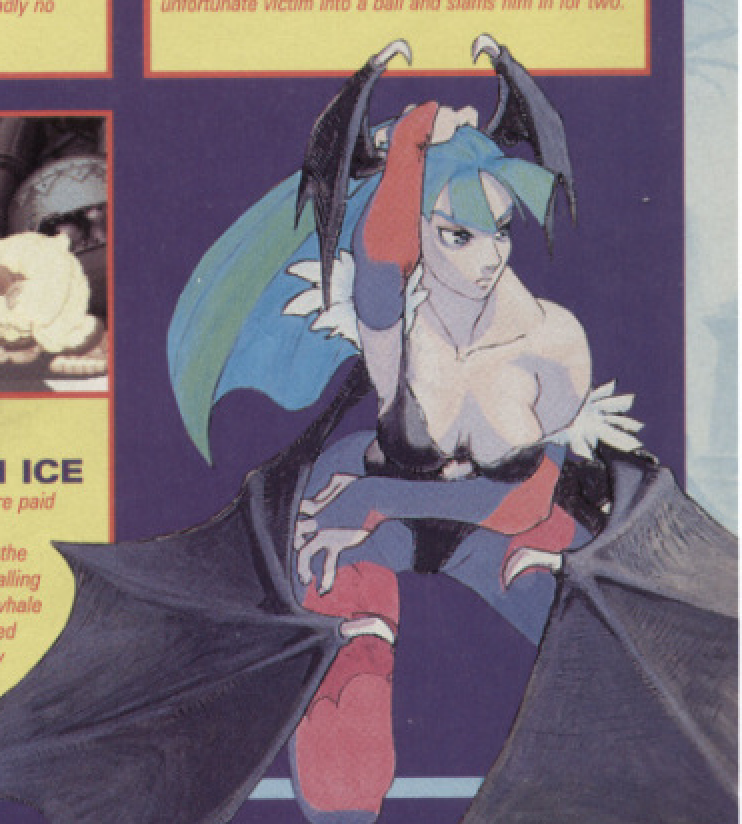
Now this is just plain silly. Zabel summons his grotty monster friend to act as a basketball net, rolls his unfortunate victim into a ball and slams him in for two.



1

SASQUATCH: THIN ICE

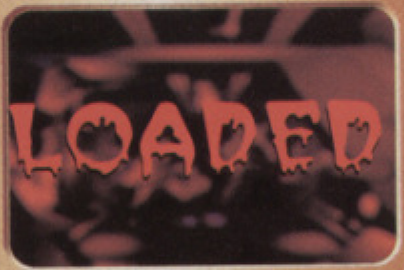
The hallowed traditions of Hanna Barbera are paid tribute when Sasquatch releases this chilly discharge. Stooges walking across this find the Laws of Physics momentarily defied, them falling through into the Arctic ocean and a miffed whale then catapulting them back landward. Judged the winner solely on the basis of the Scooby Doo-esque slippery soundeffect and windmilling arms.











BY: GREMLIN

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

1 PLAYERS

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: MAY 1996

COMPLETE

"You'll never know what it's like to see your life slide out of view" according to Jarvis Cocker in Common People. He's obviously never played Loaded from Gremlin, the bitchin' Playstation-turncoat-soon-to-be-Saturn shoot 'em up that hails from the Bard of Sheffield's home town. In addition to sliding out of view, lives tend to burn to cinders, collapse in pools of blood and explode in pyrotechnics at regular intervals.







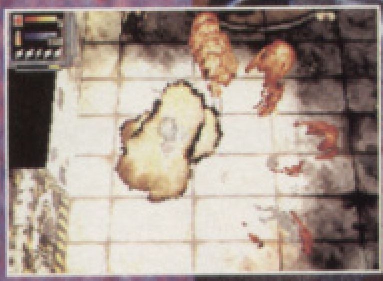
Gremlin are darned proud of Loaded. The Playstation version has sold spadefulls, lapped up by the Americans in particular, where there's a Loaded sold for every six Sony machines. Plus, the game's retro character makes it stand out from the current vogue for prissy intros, poncey polygons and general absence of sadism from developers trying to be terribly grown-up for the big-boy consoles.

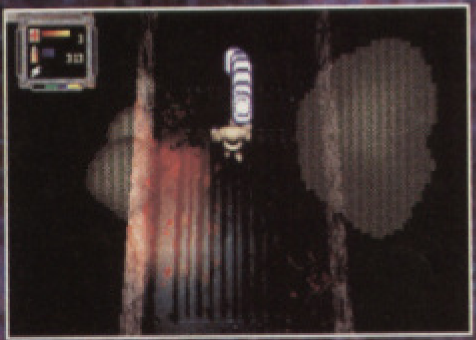
Loaded, the idea, goes back further than the Playstation project. It was originally an idea for a SNES game, Killers For Hire, by Gremlin producer Ade Carliss. The cornerstones of Loaded were the bases of 'Killers': psychotic characters, frenetic gameplay ('the thinking man's Smash TV', no less) and a forced overhead perspective utilising 3-D for depth.

The collapse in the SNES market put paid to the project and the idea was mooted for the Playstation, initially only as a joke. Ade explains, "Loaded seemed out of step with what everyone was trying to do with the new hardware. A lot of the early games had fancy graphics and effects but no soul, whereas Loaded was almost backward-looking in its idea of a game relying on its gameplay".

Now no longer a joke, the conversion to the Saturn continues apace. Work on a sequel, Reloaded, is underway, which Gremlin say will have a more developed role-playing element and new characters. The team are finding comments and suggestions on the first game helpful in respect of Reloaded, so bear that in mind if you buy Loaded when it's released in May.











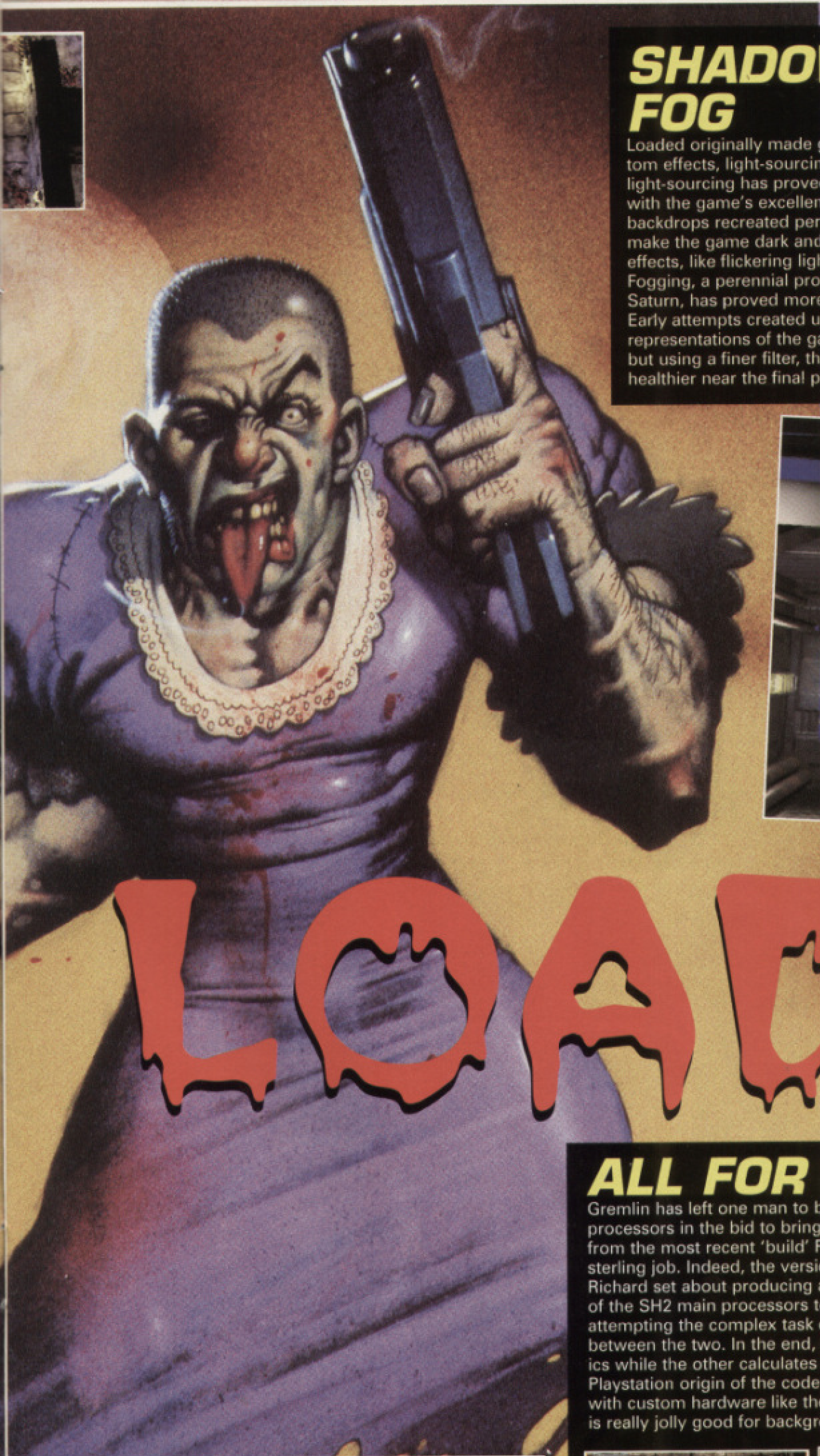
JAIL BAIT

Loaded is a revenger's tragedy in the grand tradition. The player chooses one of a band of mercenaries who have been incarcerated on a grim prison planet. Few might shed tears over a bunch of scary-looking psychotics being banged up, but in this case an even scarier pyschotic FUB ('fat ugly boy') has been responsible for setting them up. However, before you can say 'Care in the Community' the lunatics are taking over the asylum.

Presumably someone has smuggled the heavy weaponry on offer into the prison in a box of Pop Tarts, as you are able to commence an immediate killing spree. The multi-level prison is distinctly overmanned, with guards running in all directions, until you begin some 'downsizing'. As well as killing, players must collect keys to open colour-coded secure areas of the maps, which resemble mazes in the early part of the game. Later, as you emerge from the lower levels of the prison, exterior levels with open spaces replace them. Each character has a unique main weapon and smart bomb which can be powered up with additional collectables.



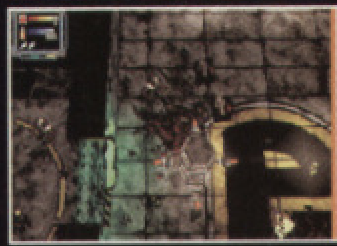




SHADOWS AND FOG

Loaded originally made good use of Playstation custom effects, light-sourcing and translucent fog. The light-sourcing has proved to be no real problem, with the game's excellent atmoshperic dappled backdrops recreated perfectly. The static visuals make the game dark and moody, but intermittent effects, like flickering lighting, bring the zones to life. Fogging, a perennial programming problem for the Saturn, has proved more difficult to reproduce. Early attempts created ugly cross-hatchings as poor representations of the game's smoky explosions, but using a finer filter, these are looking much healthier near the final product.







LOADED

ALL FOR ONE

Gremlin has left one man to battle with the Saturn's dual processors in the bid to bring Loaded to the Saturn. And from the most recent 'build' Richard Evans is doing a sterling job. Indeed, the version we saw was too fast! Richard set about producing an early version using one of the SH2 main processors to run the game before attempting the complex task of dividing the work between the two. In the end, one handles all the graphics while the other calculates game logic. The Playstation origin of the code prevented experimentation with custom hardware like the Saturn's VDP1 chip which is really jolly good for backgrounds.



Concentrating on recreating the perfect gaming experience has been the priority in bringing the game to Saturn. These shots illustrate a grimy public toilet ambience so real you could almost be there.











IN YOUR FACE

A game with the nature of Loaded is bound to offend. A flagrant disrespect for sentient life is shown, with buckets of red gore spilled in all directions. The effects are neatly programmed, with permanent blood stains on ceilings and floors to show your handiwork. Some countries have a historical problem with blood, and get around it by insisting on different colours. Japan dictates alien-style green fluid, Germans demand a bizarre black plasma but in good old Blighty, your sprite cadavers will be covered in the appropriate claret. Unless you're using a flamethrower, when they'll come over all crispy duck in hue.









CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Gremlin now have a generic in-house Motion Capture system, one of the biggest in Europe, actually. Motion Capture, as we've detailed before, is a method of recording human or animal movement to use for sprite or polygon animation in games. Gremlin's facilities use clothing marked with reflective baubles which are traced on camera, digitised into frames on a powerful computer. These are converted to vector diagrams which are sent downline to Gremlin's graphic artists. All Loaded's animations, including FMV character sequences, were created in this way, with the game team stepping into the various roles (Vox was played by the receptionist).





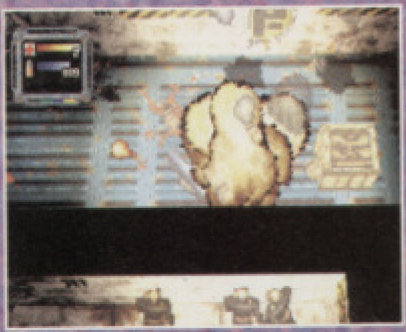
EAT MY POP

Loaded boasts music by well-known indie band Pop Will Eat Itself. The two tracks, 'RSVP' and 'Kick to Kill', come from their current album Dos Dedos Mis Amigos. RSVP has already charted in the 'hit parade' making Loaded the only game to feature a commercially released single. The techno tracks suit the game's industrial look perfectly. And defying assumptions of market-led impetus for the project, the band genuinely do like playing the game. Apparently, a demo disc given to them of PSX version was overheated and rendered useless within the space of a weekend-long session.





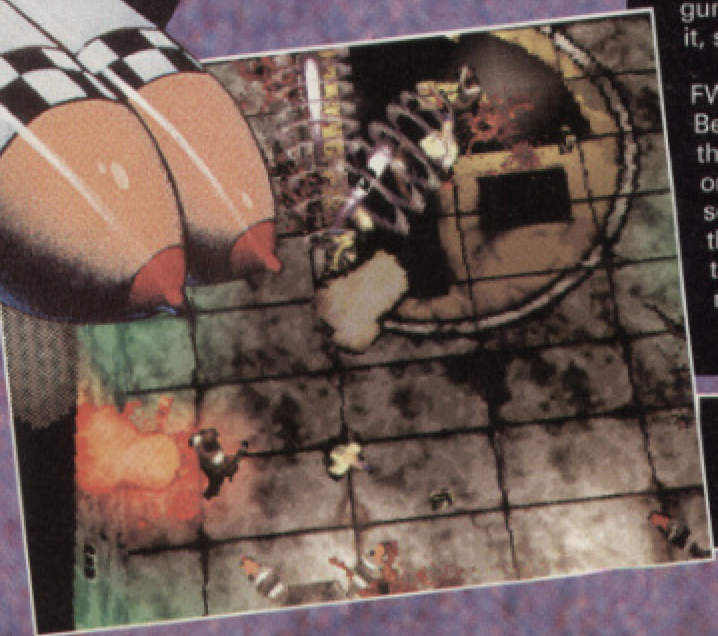
Let's talk light-sourcing, as this was one area where the Saturn was supposedly lagging behind the Playstation. Gremlin devised a 'glo-art' system for the original Loaded, demonstrated by the green glow of the security door indicators and more subtle shading of light into shade. This is a Saturn screenshot of the same effects. No problems, it seems.









DODGY CHARACTERS

The characters for Loaded were developed back in the days of the original SNES project. They can safely be said to be like no other in gaming, with elements likely to offend all right-minded Songs of Praise viewers. Well, after Ade had created bios, a former 2000AD artist (you know, the Judge Dredd comic) stepped in with the stunning artwork shown here. However, a different ex-2000AD bod has already started on character art for Reloaded. The departure of crayon wizard 1 was put down to 'musical differences' (snorts from the entire Gremlin office at this juncture). Crayon wizard 2 has already produced a scary drawing of a psychotic space nun who roams the galaxy collecting for charity in a skull. But console yourself with these for now:

CAP'N GUNS



A space pirate with a fondness for dustbin lids on his head and two-handed gun action.

MAMMA



Who's a big boy then? Mamma's tantrums are something to behold, with his nappy-filling Wobble bomb boom-shake-shaking the room.

VOX



Loaded's non-token female, and every opportunity for sexploitation has been jumped upon. But see that spiral special in action and we cannot dissent — the babe is sex.

BOUNCA



Flying the flag for subtlelty, Bounca carries an explosive pair of bazookas around. That's Bazookas in both the General Patten and Dolly Parton sense. You had better be on the guest list.

BUTCH



He's not a cross-dresser, he's bloody livid, darling! Stick a skinhead in an Oscar de la Rente, sling him a pair of slingbacks and a shotgun and tell the bugger to get on with it, sweetie.

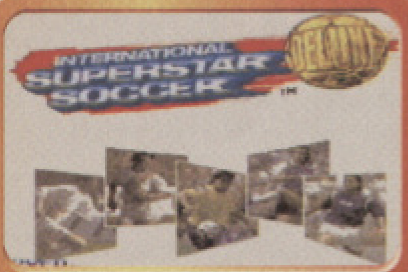
FWANK



Beware of the silent F. All the world loves a clown, or at least would claim so with Fwank's firearm thrust into its midriff. In that situation he's everybody's best mate.

JARVIS COCKER EPILOGUE: Signs of that temper from the past in Sheffield. Pulp rehearsing above a pub. Barman comes up to complain at 'racket'. Door opens. "Piss off, we're practising our Art" snarls bespectacled troubadour of a generation.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE



BY	KONAMI
GAME TYPE	FOOTBALL
RELEASE	TBA
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-4
MEG	4
COMPLETE	

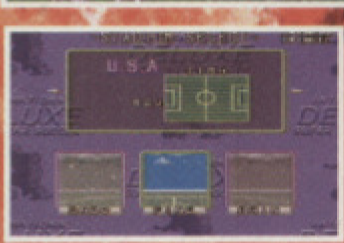
If you've never been to a football match then you don't know what you're missing. You pay to get the opportunity to hurl abuse at 22 grown men, safe in the knowledge that they can't do anything about it (unless one of them is Eric Cantona). Then you have the stone cold pies, blokes who are so fat that they need three seats, the songs, the endless queues for the bogs at half time. Need I go on? Actually if the opinion around our office is anything to go by, then hardly anyone has experienced the excitement of our national game first hand.

This is where ISS Soccer, to give it its more common name, comes in. It has become one of the most popular games on the SNES and received much critical acclaim. So obviously it must be pretty realistic. But until now, Megadrive owners have not had the chance to taste the experience. At Konami towers, however, programming is well underway on a Megadrive version.

The delay has benefited the Megadrive adaptation, which debuts with the 'Deluxe' version so we won't have to wait for mindless sequels for all the important 'upgrades'. This means that the fluent gameplay, and all the stats you can imagine, are all included in one batch for a limited time only, one-off deal etc.

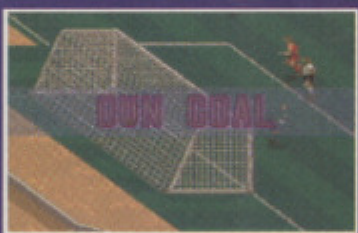






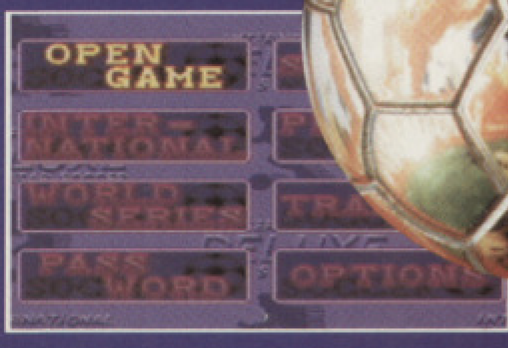
STATTO, STATTO

Whatever you could possibly change in a footie game is possible to alter here. Man to man marking? No worries. Four-two-four formation? Got it covered. Even the level of the bounce of the ball and the skill level of you and your opponents hasn't been left out, with 5 adjustable skill settings: 1 being the Welsh Harp Sunday morning pub team, and 5 coming in at about Juventus standards. If you don't like the team colours, they can be changed, or if one player is too skilful, he can quickly be cut down to size.















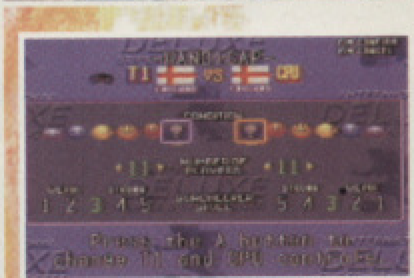
The hand with the freeky tattoo is actually a Gallic symbol from the tribe known only as Cantonanas. They are specially known for their flying kicks and collar-raising tantrums. You have been warned – stay away. They are nasty people.

PENALTY REF!

As well as the tournaments and friendly games, a World Series can be entered into where a total of 36 teams play a series of stages (if you can get far enough, up to 70 games!) that determine series champions. A penalty shoot out option is here, with up to four human players able to take part at one time, and a training mode to get you used to the finer aspects of the game. The Scenario mode puts you in someone else's shoes as you can take over a preset game situation and play on as if you'd never been away.







Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption





WE'RE TALKING REAL HERE

The level of detail used in the game is, quite frankly, amazing. Everything you could possibly want in a football game is in here somewhere, if you want to look. Things like the substitute warming up on the side of the pitch, and the cards being held up to indicate when he's coming off, and the superglue-like marking of the best defenders are unparalleled in any Megadrive football games thus far. And just in case that wasn't enough, the artificial intelligence of the computer-controlled players has been tweaked sufficiently to provide many a frustrating offside decision and realistic goalies that aren't as easily fooled as in previous versions.

CONGO



BY: SOA

GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE

PLAYERS: 1

PRICE: N/A

RELEASE: IMPORT

COMPLETE

Licensed from one of last year's duffer movies, Congo is a Sega of American project that went on the back burner when the film made a monkey out of Universal in the States. Both game and flick are based on a novel by Michael Crichton, the author of Jurassic Park. Set in the titular jungle region of West Africa, a team of scientists are exploring a local myth of a lost city Zinj.

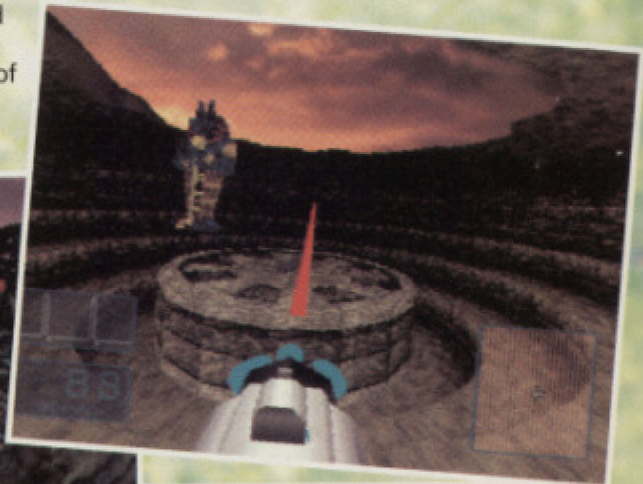
They hope to find a particular form of diamond useful in laser communication technology. Some of them go missing and a fresh team, led by a girlie scientist, find rumbles in the jungle. What could have been a thriller with a twist sadly turned out to be a rendition of the clunky gibbon with actors in furry suits attempting to scare the audience. Nevertheless, the film somehow managed to be a commercial success, taking over $100m worldwide.

The game thankfully steers clear of the movie plot, using the setting, the foliage and some of the techno to create a Doom-style explore-and-shoot 'em up. The game progresses through the dense-forested tracks of the river basin, before entering the city environs, then through underground areas to the sacred areas of the monkeys. Along the way you find equipment left by the preceding parties, and also the vital diamonds, which must be collected to keep your company happy.

To be fair, what initially looks like a clunker turns out to be quite interesting and rather oddball later on. It's also a huge game, with a dozen levels of massive maps which become more labyrinthine as you progress, also posing puzzles tactical and strategic. Sega UK have, they stress, no plans to release this, with their current packed schedule of AA titles, but we feel its worth investigating if spotted in your local import shop.













Pant-soiling pandemonium as the two-headed snake launches a lethal Ribena attack.

HARD DAY'S NIGHT

The game is split into 'days', each taking the player between set markers on the landscape. Each day begins with a satellite message passed back to the corp. in the States, and limited objectives, such as they are, are given. The first involves finding the wrecked plane before spider venom (there's loads on the first level) overwhelms you.







Try pulling the legs off that, you smug get. Well it's either that or sticking the whole thing on the BarB and having an extra bowl of twiglets to munch on.








BURN BABY BURN

In the tradition of Doom clones, you start with a humble pistol, but there are four other weapons to locate, supposedly abandoned by the preceding party. With these, things become much more fun. The shotgun has a fair amount of power, the machine-gun rocks, the missile launcher looks good at least, but the game's real beauty is a secret laser. Slice 'em up and watch 'em fall.





The Star Trek-style laser is the game's hidden treat, but can only be found well into the mission. Once you've located its three components you then have to assemble them to get the gun working. Then, all you have to do is buy a pair of pointy ears and you'll be a bona fide Trekkie.





Having run into the twiglet-legged spider from hell, we now meet the Jelly Bean-tongued lizard from Bognor. The only thing to do here is unleash your Cadbury's buttons. Sorry.



These steps lead to your destiny. A bit part in the film as a gorilla's arse. Don't worry, is requires talent.



WATCHING THE WILDLIFE

Naturally, the game has had to expand on monkey predators alone for the sake of variety — an endless diet of ape meat would be dull. Step forward spiders, venom-spitting lizards, evil wooden stakes and, er, deadly Egyptian monoliths. Yes, things do get bizarre, but engagingly so.






At this point Marcus had one of his convienient 'creative burn-outs' during which he complained about not being able to write anything suitable for this caption space. He then proceeded to bugger off down the sandwich shop to scoff his face. He claimed to have come up with something funny on his return, but by that time someone more talented had already filled the space. Git.

VIRTUA FIGHTER

BY SEGA

GAME TYPE BEAT 'EM UP

RELEASE TBA

PRICE TBA

PLAYERS 1

MEG 4

COMPLETE













No, its not an April Fool. They've actually gone and done it – Virtua Fighter on Game Gear. Sega's second 8meg Game Gear cartridge (after last year's so-so Garfield game) uses the extra capacity to greater effect by presenting a 2-D facsimile of everyone's favourite beat 'em up.

Akira, Jacky, Kage, Sarah, Pai, Wolf, Lau and Dural slug it out against a series of new backdrops which suggest that whoever programmed this was quite hungry at the time – the locations include a Chinese take-away and a steak house. The game, which features cheeky new interpretations of our VF faves, comes with the added bonus of a 'story mode'. The gang are put through all manner of high jinks which include Pai being chased by a street gang called the Crazy Dragons, whose leader wants her as his wife. The glamorous film star is unimpressed, finding him "disgusting and without honour." Meanwhile, Akira interrupts stuffing his face to turn his attentions to the poor girl, and everything starts getting a bit fruity. Not one to put up with sexual harassment, Pai challenges him to a scrap...











THE GAME'S THE SAME

Incredibly, Virtua Fighter Animation succeeds in preserving the spirit, and even much of the feel, of the original Virtua Fighter in a 2-D environment. While what moves you are able to execute are nowhere near as sophisticated as those you'd use on Saturn or 32X, the end results look similar, with each fighter maintaining their strongest traits and tricks from the original game.



POINTS OF VIEW

You can choose to view the game in three different modes – 'Normal', which gives you a fixed mid-range perspective on the action; 'Large', which gives you a close-up of the enlarged character sprites, and 'Real time' which constantly switches between a sensible mixture of the two, approximating the way the coin-op zooms in and out of the action.





THE MEAN MACHINES SEGA READERS' SURVEY

It's that time of year again – that time when the suits interact with you, the reader, in a 'getting to know you' kinda way. Just so we can access a wider operational landscape and refine our market demographics. Or something. Anyway, you can help us keep Lord Emap happy by filling in this form. We're offering ten free annual subscriptions to MEAN MACHINES as an incentive – the winners will be randomly picked from all the entries. All of which represents a superb potential return on the investment of a mere few minutes on your part. We're too good to you. Anyway, we kick off with a bit of a tricky one...

1) Are you:

Male ☑ Female ❑

2) How old are you?

- 14 or under ☑
- 15 ❑
- 16 ❑
- 17-19 ❑
- 20-24 ❑
- 25-29 ❑
- 30-34 ❑
- 35+ ❑

3) Which of the following machines do you currently:

	own:	intend to buy:	have access to:
Sega Megadrive	☑	❑	❑
Sega Game Gear	❑	❑	❑
Sega Saturn	❑	☑	❑
Nintendo SNES	❑	❑	❑
Nintendo Gameboy	❑	❑	❑
Nintendo Ultra 64	❑	❑	❑
IBM PC compatible	❑	❑	❑
Sony Playstation	❑	❑	❑
Neo Geo CD	❑	❑	❑
3DO	❑	❑	❑
Atari Jaguar	❑	❑	❑

Other.....Crap ones.....

4) How many games do you own?

- None ❑
- 1 ❑
- 2-5 ☑
- 6-10 ❑
- 11-25 ❑
- 26-50 ❑
- More than 50 ❑

5) How many games do you buy?

- None ❑
- A couple every year ❑
- One every three months ❑
- One every two months ❑
- One per month ☑
- Two per month ❑
- Three per month ❑
- More than four every month ❑

6) How many games do you get given (as presents etc)?

- None ☑
- A couple every year ❑
- One every three months ❑
- One every two months ❑
- One per month ❑
- More than one per month ❑

7) On average, how much do you spend on games/equipment each month?

- Nothing ❑
- Under £10 ❑
- £10-£24 ☑
- £25-£49 ❑
- £50-£74 ❑
- £75-£99 ❑
- Over £100 ❑

8) On average, how much time do you spend playing games every week?

- Less than one hour ❑
- 1-2 hours ❑
- 2-4 hours ☑
- 4-6 hours ❑
- 6-8 hours ❑
- 10-12 hours ❑
- More than 12 hours per week ❑

9) How long have you been playing and video games?

- A month or less ❑
- 1-3 months ❑
- 3-6 months ❑
- 6-12 months ❑
- 12-18 months ❑
- 18 months-2 years ❑
- 2-3 years ❑
- 3-4 years ❑
- 4-6 years ☑
- Over 6 years ❑

10) What helps you to decide which games to buy?

	very important:	important:	not important:
A games magazine review	[x]	[ ]	[ ]
A games magazine preview	[ ]	[ ]	[x]
Demo disc	[ ]	[ ]	[x]
Recommendation by friend	[ ]	[x]	[ ]
Advert in games mag	[ ]	[ ]	[x]
Advert on TV/poster	[ ]	[ ]	[x]
Shop demonstration	[x]	[ ]	[ ]

11) Where do you normally buy your games and equipment?

- [ ] Dixons
- [ ] Woolworths
- [ ] Argos
- [ ] Comet
- [ ] Boots
- [ ] Toys R Us
- [ ] WH Smith
- [ ] Our Price
- [ ] Currys
- [ ] Future Zone
- [ ] Electronic Boutique
- [ ] Game
- [ ] John Menzies
- [x] Blockbuster Video
- [ ] Mail order
- [ ] Local shop

Depends

12) Where do you usually buy your video games magazines from?

- [ ] WH Smith
- [ ] John Menzies
- [ ] Martins
- [ ] Forbuoys
- [ ] Tesco
- [x] Local newsagent
- [ ] Subscription

13) Was your copy of Mean Machines Sega...

- [x] Saved by the newsagent
- [ ] Delivered by the newsagent
- [ ] Bought from a shop

14) Who pays for the magazine?

- [x] You
- [ ] Your parents/other relative
- [ ] A friend

15) How many people apart from yourself will see your copy of MMS?

- [ ] No-one else
- [ ] One
- [x] Two
- [ ] Three
- [ ] Four
- [ ] Five
- [ ] More than six

16) How often do you buy MMS?

- [x] Every month
- [ ] Once every two months
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Rarely

17) Would you ever buy a game without seeing a review in MMS?

- [x] Yes
- [x] No

18) Which other magazines do you normally read?

- [x] C & VG
- [ ] GamesMaster
- [ ] Nintendo Magazine System
- [ ] Sega Saturn Magazine
- [ ] Sega Power
- [ ] Sega Pro
- [ ] Saturn Plus
- [ ] Playstation Plus
- [ ] Maximum

19) What influences your decision to buy a magazine most?

- [ ] A free gift
- [x] What is on the front cover
- [ ] The price
- [ ] The contents

20) How long do you spend reading MMS?

- [ ] 1/2 hour
- [ ] 1 hour
- [ ] 1-2 hours
- [x] 2-3 hours
- [ ] 4-5 hours
- [ ] Over 5 hours

21) What will you do with this copy of MMS?

- [x] Add to collection
- [ ] Give it to a friend
- [ ] Throw it away
- [x] Keep it for future reference for games

22) What are your favourite types of games?

Favourite: Raceing, beatem ups

Like: Plat form ect

Dislike: Crap ones

23) What peripherals, if any, will you buy over the next year?

?

24) What do you do in your spare time?

	Daily	At least twice per week	Weekly	Monthly	Less than monthly
Play sports					
Watch TV	X				
Watch satellite TV		X			X
Watch videos		X			
Listen to music	X				
Listen to the radio	X				
Play arcade games			X	X	
Go to the cinema				X	

25) What is your favourite pop group?

[illegible]

26) What is your favourite television programme?

27) Which of the following do you buy?

- [x] CDs
- [ ] Tapes
- [x] Videos
- [ ] Clothes
- [ ] Shoes
- [ ] Trainers
- [x] Sweets
- [ ] Crisps
- [x] Soft drinks
- [ ] Alcohol
- [ ] Takeaway food
- [ ] Books
- [ ] Comics

28) Do you have a bank and/or building society account?

A Bank accaunt

29) Rank the regular features in MEAN MACHINES in order of preference – 1 for your favourite, 7 for your least favourite.

- News 3
- Out Now 7
- Mean Yob 6
- Q & A 5
- Work In Progress 4
- Previews 2
- Reviews 1

30) Which of the following free gifts would you most like to see?

- [ ] Posters
- [x] Tips books
- [ ] Pogs
- [ ] Badges
- [ ] Stickers

31) Would you be prepared to pay more for the magazine if a demo disc of Saturn games was included?

Yes, if I had a Saturn

32) Of all the recently published issues, which do you feel has had the best front cover?

33) And which the worst?

34) How long have you been reading MEAN MACHINES?

- [ ] This issue only
- [ ] For 2-6 months
- [ ] Over six months
- [x] Over a year
- [ ] Over two years

Please photocopy, or cut out, these completed pages and send them to:

Readers' Survey (MMS)
Marketing Department
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Priory Court
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

STEVE'S TIPS

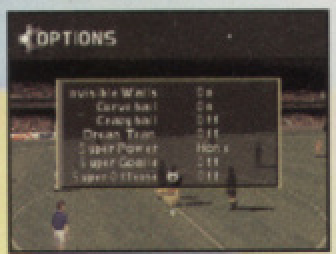
Everyone has seen the film 'The Fly' right? Well, just like that bloke in the film I've climbed into a bizarre machine and turned myself into a giant insect. See, me and my old mate, the Tips Bat, were hanging around in Steve's old laboratory and our curiosity got the better of us – all I can remember is that I have transformed from the Tips Bat into the Tips Fly. I still have an essence of bat in me, however – I can't see in the light, and every time I land, I always want to hang upside down for a while. Anyway, my astounding knowledge of tips has survived, so if you wish to extend my vocabulary, send your cheats to THE TIPS FLY, TIPS LABORATORY, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. As usual, a Saturn game is up for grabs for the best Saturn tip of the month.





SATURN

FIFA '96





SECRET OPTIONS

At last! The cheats you've all been waiting for have finally arrived, and we got them. After much toil and sweat, we finally worked out how to do it. And was it a relief! The amount of people we've had phoning up asking for these is unbelievable, so you can all stop now, and cheat to your hearts content! To execute these you have to start the game, pause it and go to the options screen and enter these codes. Then go to the pause menu, highlight Resume Game and press A to bring up the menu.

BBBZAAAZ	Invisible walls
ZABZBB	Curve ball
BAZBBZAB	Crazy ball
ZAZZZZZZZZ	Super power
AAAAAZZZZZ	Super goalie
AAAAAZB	Super offence
ZZZZZBZ	Super defence
AZABAZ	Shoot out
AZBAZB	Stupid ream
AAZZBBAA	Dream team



RAYMAN





LIVES AND CONTINUES CHEATS

Even though I printed a Rayman cheat a couple of months back, it was a little unclear, so I've decided to print it again after a couple of queries. Pause the game, and press the following button combination: A, Right + B, Down/Left Diagonal + R button, Y + C + Z. This may take a couple of goes, but it does work, trust me. And the continues cheat is along the same lines as that. Pause the game again, press Left, press and hold A and C, and release in order, press and hold Z, L, and R and then release in order and then press and hold X, Z, UP and release in that order. Then unpause.



NBA JAM TE





CHEATS

Following on from last month's batch of secret characters, we have now been given access to a few of the multiple cheats that are stashed away in the depths of Jamdom. Of course, we expect that there are a load more, but for the time being, you'll have to make do with these. Enter the codes on the 'Tonight's Match Up' screen.

Gigantic Heads	Press B, A, Y, C repeatedly, in that order
Baby Mode	Press B and Y repeatedly.
Giant Body	Hit A and C repeatedly
Power Up Defence	Press Right, Up, Down, Right, Down, Up.
Power Up 3 Pointers	Press Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Down, Up.
Maximum Power	Press Right, Right, Left, Right, C, C, Right.
Quick Hands	Press Left, Left, Left, Left, Y, Right.













DIGITAL PINBALL

CHEATS

Whether these cheats are of any use is a a mystery to me as I've never actually played the game. So if they don't work you can all go and beat up Brian Lelas from Dublin, because he sent them in.

Press the buttons when you get to the 'Press Start' screen.

Credits- C, B, A, A, B, C, Y, Z, X, Down, Down.

Weird Numbers- X, Y, Z, X, Y, Z, C, B, A, Up, Up.

Sound Pro version- X, X, Y, Y, Z, Z, A, A, B, B, C, C.

Plasma Pro Version- Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, X.

SATURN

SEGA RALLY

CLEAN SCREEN

Not quite sure if this one works, as I didn't have a British copy of the game to test it out on, but here it is anyway. To clear the screen of the lap times, the speedometer and all that, get to the 3 Laps/Free Run option in time attack, and press L, X, A and C at the same time. This should make the screen go blank if it works. If



DARIUS

CHEATS

This fairly amusing shooter was officially released a few months back. In a bid to spice up the game, a couple of cheats have been added. For a new 'abnormal difficulty' setting go to the 'Game Start' and 'Option' screen and hold X. Now press Z, C, L, B, Left, R, L. The new setting should now be available on the option screen. To get nine credits press X, A, L, R, Left, and then hold L and press X, C, Z, A, Right, Right. Now start the game and each player will have 9 credits at their disposal.









MEGADRIVE

EARTHWORM JIM

CHEATS

Again, we have had loads of people phoning up requesting cheats for this, and again we have delivered. Well Richard Cross has. He phoned in with a batch of cheats for this, but alas we are still waiting for the level select cheat. Anyway, here are the cheats. To access them pause the game, and enter the following codes.

To make the pause screen disappear for a short while press A, A, A, A, B, B, B, B.
To re-stock your plasma gun press C, C, C, C, A, A, A, B.
To fill up the Homing Missile press C, C, C, C, A, A, B, A.
To have a full Bubble Gun press C, C, C, C, A, A, B, B.
If you want a full Barn Blast press C, C, C, C, A, A, B, C.
To get full money, whatever that does, Press C, A, C, A, C, A, C, A.

SYNDICATE

PASSWORD

Just a quickie this one, as sent in by Peter May from Nuneaton. This code will let you have 36 areas, 18 cyborgs, all mods, all weapons and all of 2 million quid. Fantastic. Here we go:
DCPX9B0000CC101GG0PQ.







TOY STORY

LEVEL SKIP AND INVINCIBILITY







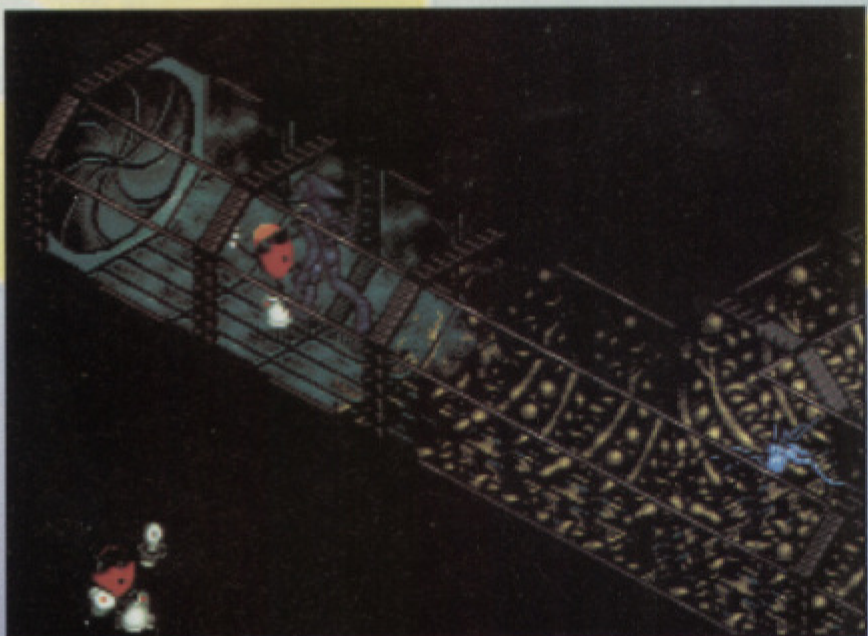


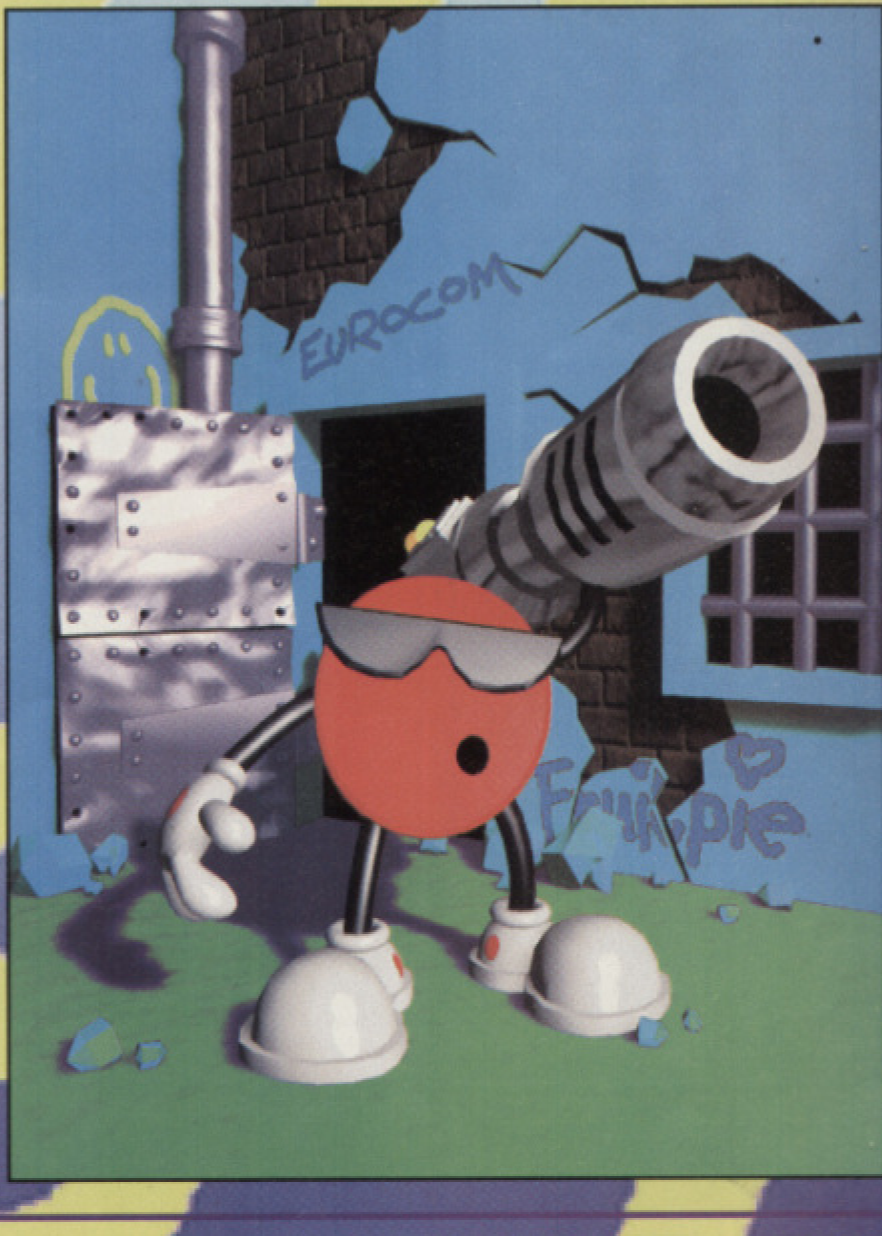




Numerous rounds of applause must go to Andy East from West Yorkshire for being first off the mark with some Toy Story cheats. Not yet available officially when he sent them in, but by the time you read this it should have just made the shops. Anyway, for a level skip cheat, on the title screen enter A, B, Right, A, C, A, Down, A, B, Right, A. The eagle eyed among you may have noticed that this spells ABRACADABRA. You should hear a little chime when you do this. Now start the game, pause it at any point and then press A. This will skip you on a level. For invincibility get to the second stage (you can use the level skip if you so desire) and and collect 7 stars. Now jump into the toy box, and duck down for 10 seconds, and you should become invincible.

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

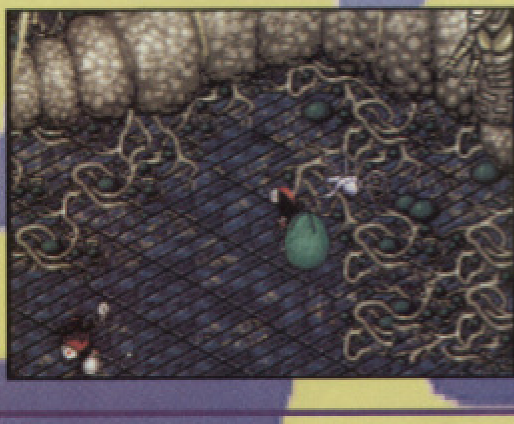




PASSWORDS

James Garrett from Woburn Sands (maybe) has sent in a complete set of codes for this top Megadrive platformer, so you can all revel in his conquest. Lovely.

Level 1	HE7ISU6M
Level 2	ZLHNXL7V
Level 3	PN7IRS8R
Level 4	N6U64YP5
Level 5	PJ6W8XOT
Level 6	4PNK4G8S
Level 7	48P7R6KD
Level 8	DUPISGY5
Level 9	ZHFT4OJO
Level 10	MVUN6576
Level 11	EYV436MF
Level 12	IJHMROZK
Level 13	GE74GXOA



We reckon that all you Saturn owners should buy this game so you can waste away hours of your life on one of the most absorbing RPGs to date. OK, it doesn't look outstanding, but in an age where graphics rule over gameplay, this game is a refreshing change. So let us escort you through the first few levels, as we present our definitive guide.

CASTLE

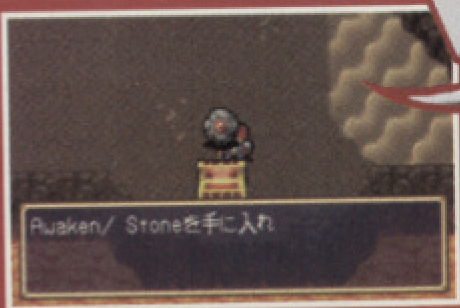
IN THE BEGINNING...

Get out of bed and listen to your folks waffle on a bit. Then, when you're asked to test out the acceleration skill, simply tap X, Y, or Z repeatedly, until the numbers under your energy reach full, and then run into the old man. He'll then go away and you'll be free to start. Before you do go, however, make sure you equip the sword and the Healing Herbs from your inventory.

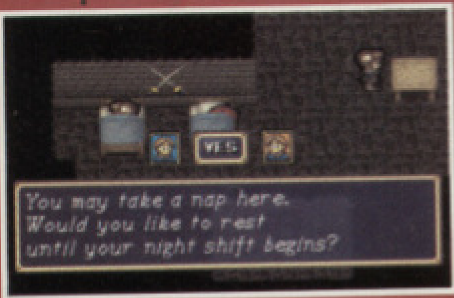
ODEGAN CASTLE

Your first task is to get to the castle. This is very easy – the old man has signposted the way there, just in case. When you reach the city, you have to stand around and listen to the old lady otherwise none of the houses will open.





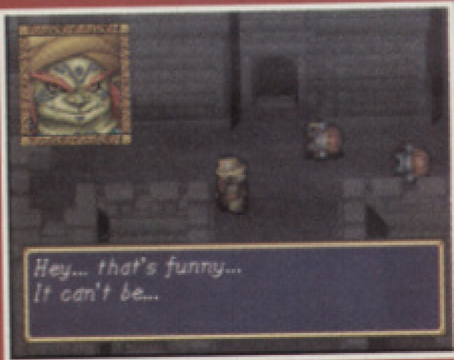
When she has finished, go to the first shop on the left as you came in, and stock up on the items. Buy a couple of record books, an angel wing, and stock up your healing herbs to about 10-15. Next make your way to the top left of the village, where you'll be able to go into the castle. Talk to the people and they'll tell you where Kaipa, the bloke who knew your father, is. He'll then give you instructions, and introduce you to Alfred, who is to be your temporary partner. Listen to him, and then make your way to the knights' quarters (ask people if you get lost), and have a kip for the night.



INTRUDER ALERT!

You'll wake to find yourself guarding outside the palace, and Alfred will decide to have a kip. Then an intruder digs his way into the grounds, and goes into a shrine. Follow him in, and you're presented with the first mini level. Follow the elf round the stages, and when you reach the third level, he'll jump over a lava pit, and do the off, as it were. Follow him round to the chest, and get the Awaken Stone, but don't bother trying to jump over as well, it's impossible. Now use one of your angel wings to get back to the start and go outside.

ONTO THE KING



Now comes a small series of events that you have no control over. The guards come and you must go to see the king. He then wonders what happens – all pretty useless stuff – and then you'll be ordered to guard the Princess. Go and have another nap, and you'll again restart, but this time, outside the Princess' quarters. The minister and Kaipa will talk to you for a while, detailing the problems, and will then leave you to guard. A mist will descend, and Banbo the Goblin will arrive.

Everyone will fall asleep, he'll take the Princess, and then you must go to the royal crypt, located outside the far right exit of the palace, to get her back.

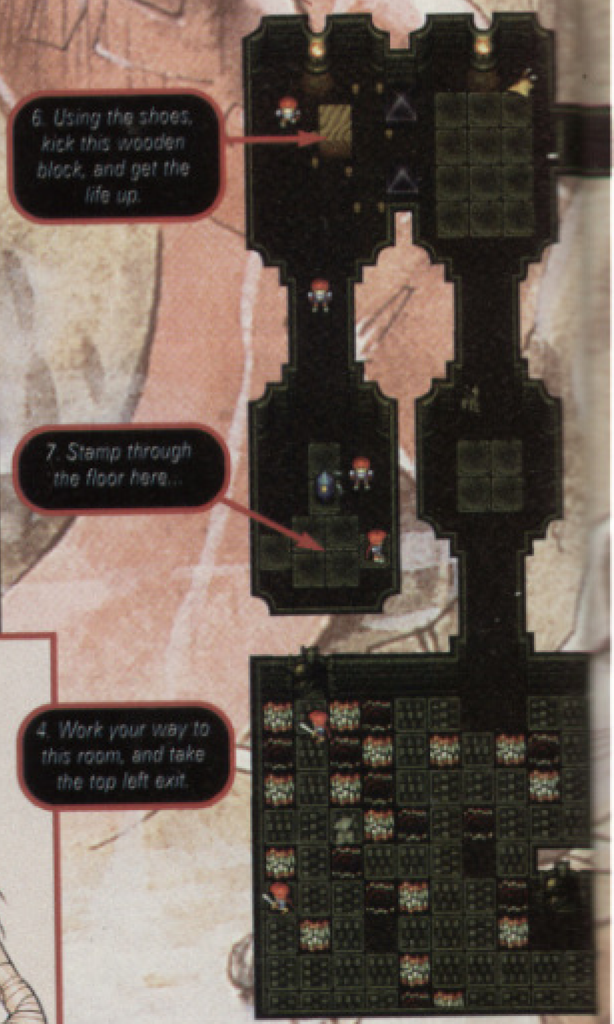


These orbs will increase your energy by half, for every one you collect. There are loads hidden throughout the game, that can only be accessed if you have certain items.

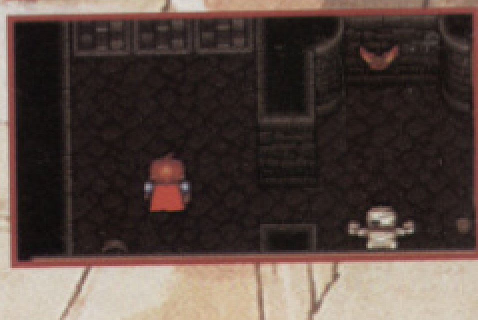


KARRY

This is the woman who turns into Princess Satera in the bottom of the Royal Crypt. She also becomes one of the bosses later in the game.









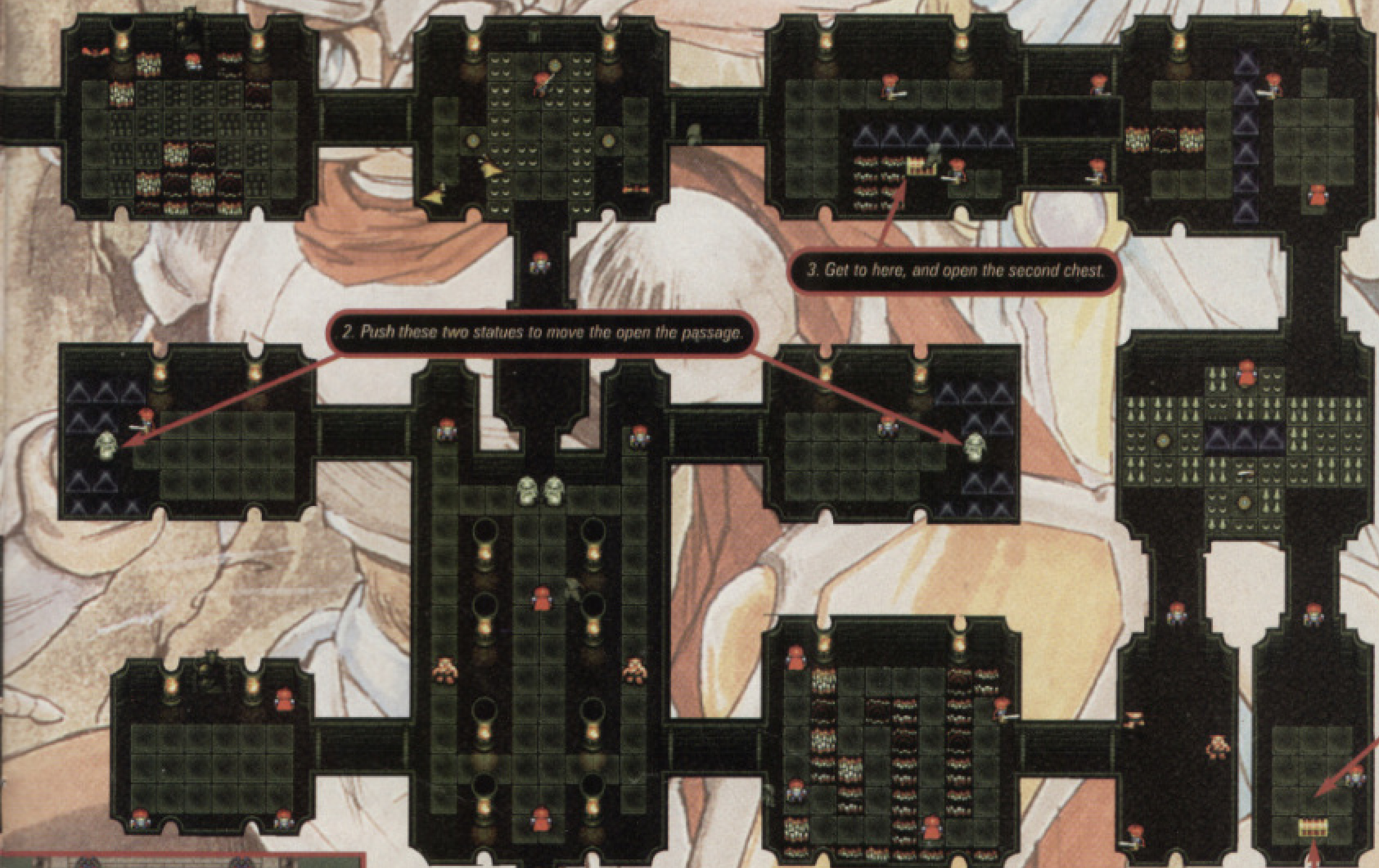
BANBO

He is the first main boss you'll encounter, and at first he is easy. He does make a comeback later in the game, however...





ROYAL CRYPT LEVEL 1



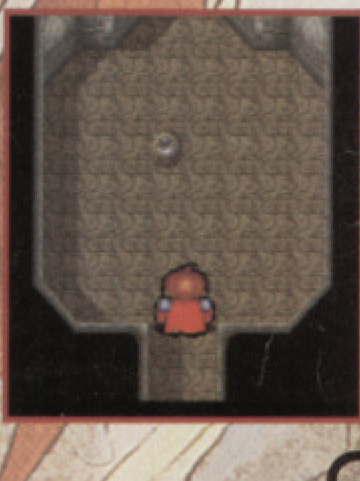














ROYAL CRYPT LEVEL 2





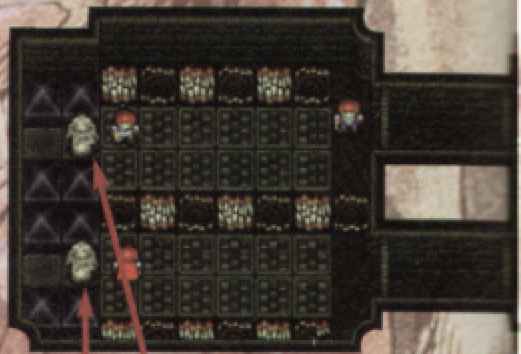
12. The elves are through here.

8. ...and push this statue.

11. Go down here, and onto the elves.

5. This chest contains heavy shoes.





10. Push these two statues to open all the passages.





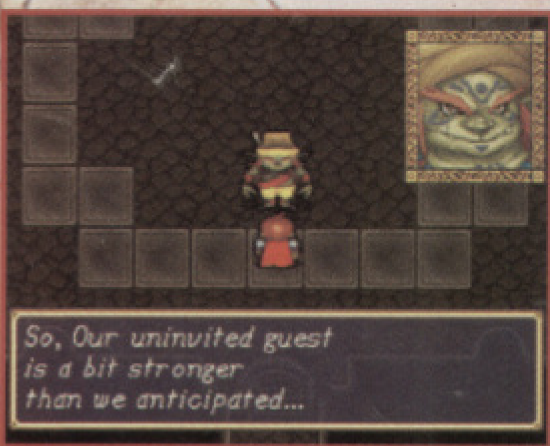
PRINCESS SATERA

POOR PRINCESS!

As you go through, all the Elves will be in a meeting. Karry will turn into the Princess to fool the King, before they realise you are watching you'll have to fight Banbo. He is really easy to nobble and only requires three hits. Once dead, he'll release some gas and will knock you out, and then they'll all regroup and turn the Princess into a swan before leaving. Aren't they nice?



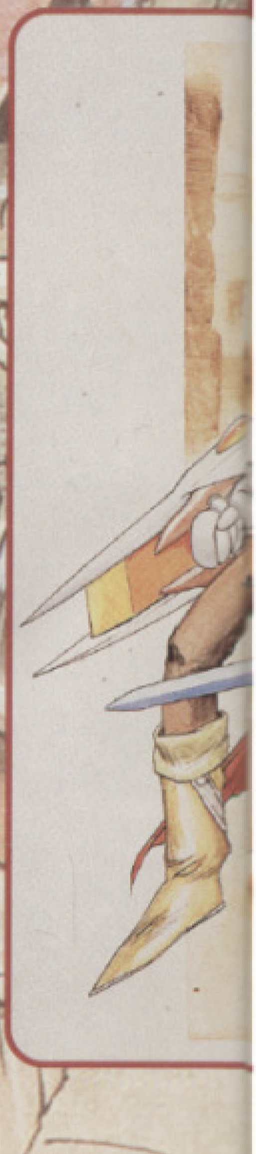
That's it love, you lie down and take a nap. Princess Satera is actually under the control of the Elves, and you must put a stop to it. Now!

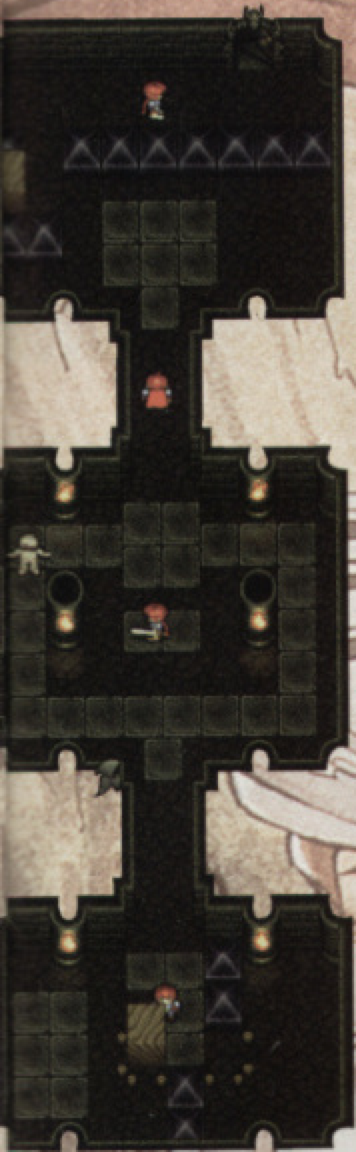


Having successfully negotiated the Royal Crypt, you then interrupt a conference between all of the Dark Elves, and must face Banbo in order to be set free.



The King is very pleased with you after you manage to rescue the Princess. But what the King doesn't realise is that the Princess is actually Karry disguised!

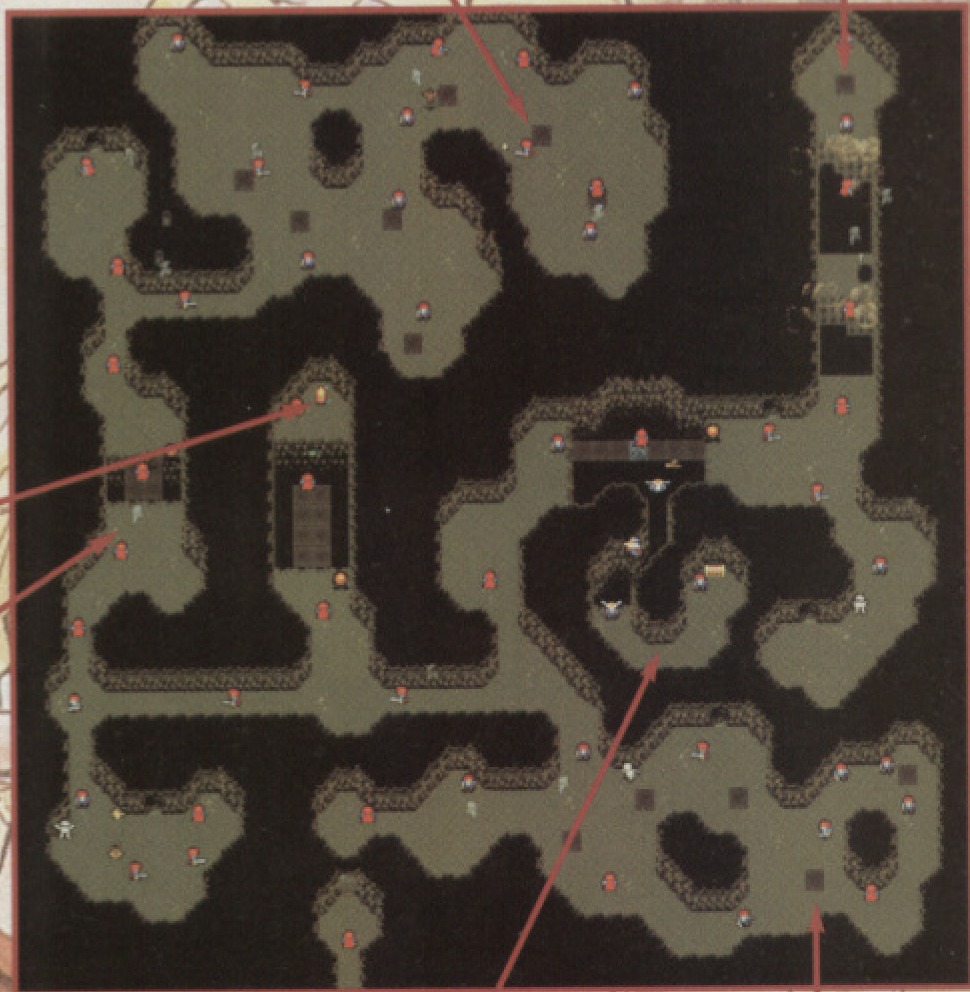




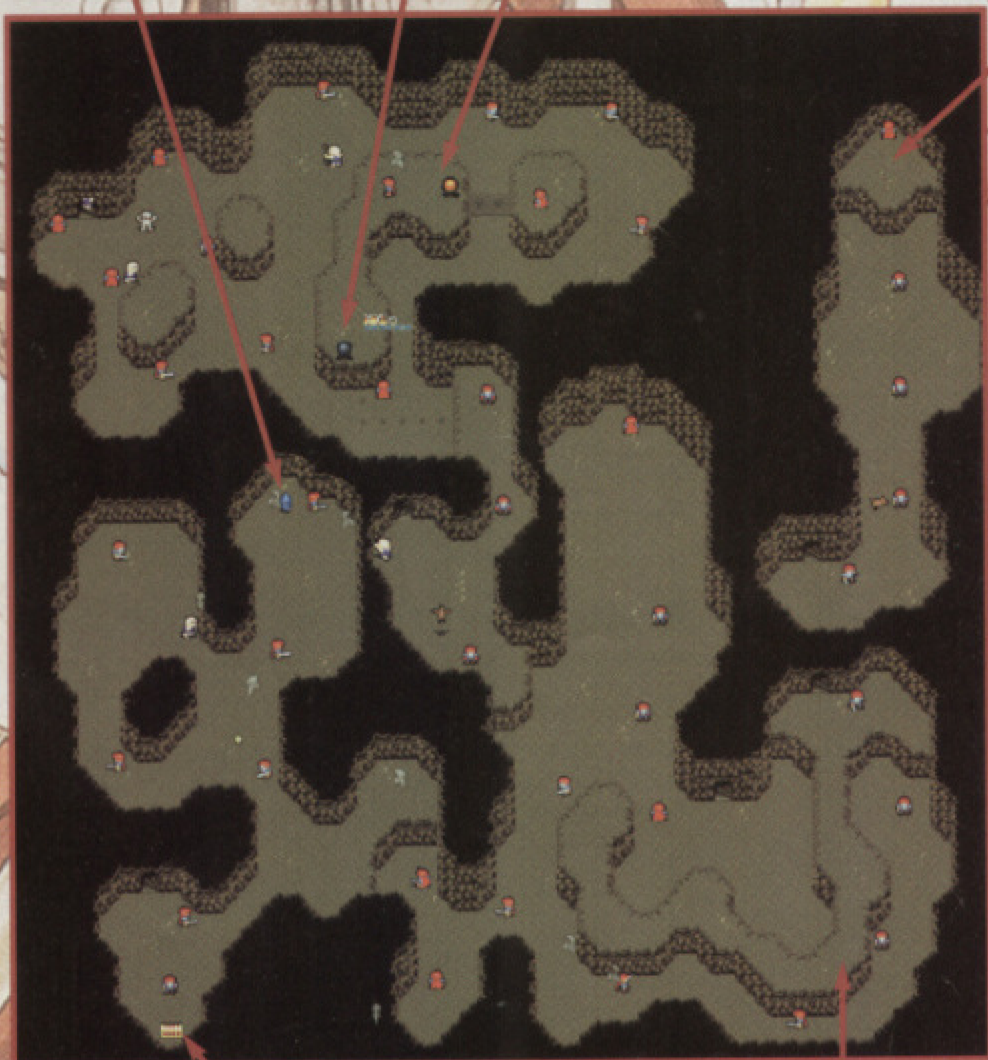
VALE OF GUDO

Once this is over go back to the King, and he'll tell you he is very worried and you must go to the Vale of Gudo, which is located in the top right of the map. Getting there is no problem, and shouldn't take any time.

LEVEL 1

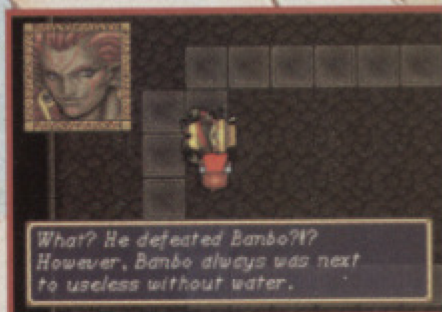


LEVEL 2





You can nullify Banbos attacks by simply hitting these ice balls so they explode.



THE SHINING HERO



Once you get to point four from the Vale of Gudo, then you require the magical hands which are located in the Lost Forest. We'll continue the guide from there next month.



BY	GT INTERACTIVE
RELEASE	MAY
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	RPG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
SLOW

ORIGIN

Defcon 5 appears inspired by the Alien movies, but there's a touch of Doom in there too.

GAME AIM

Install the defence software. Escape off MRBF-6.

BEAT THIS

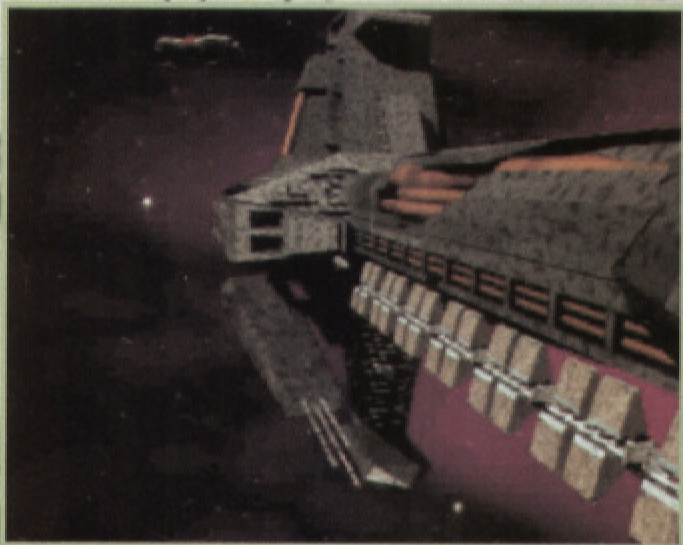
LOCATE SELF DESTRUCT & SHUTTLE KEY

DEF

After the gold-rush excesses of the late 22nd century, when deep space travel led to far-flung stellar mining colonies and attendant conflicts, the planetary resource operations of the 23rd century are ordered, peaceful, profitable. For one sector of the industry this has spelled disaster.

The Tyron Corporation, which set itself up as the frontier defence system against alien attack is being forced to scale down its operation for lack of need. Its outposts are to be automated, and its budget cut. You are charged with effecting these changes on one major outpost, MRP-6F. But shady dealings personify the upper echelons of the Tyron board. An attack on one of the outposts at this time would be just what was required to convince the Earth Federation that more, not less, defence spending is required. But that's not going to happen, is it?

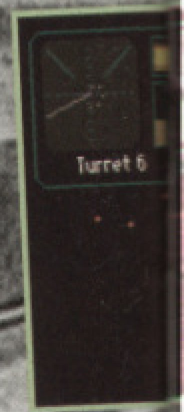












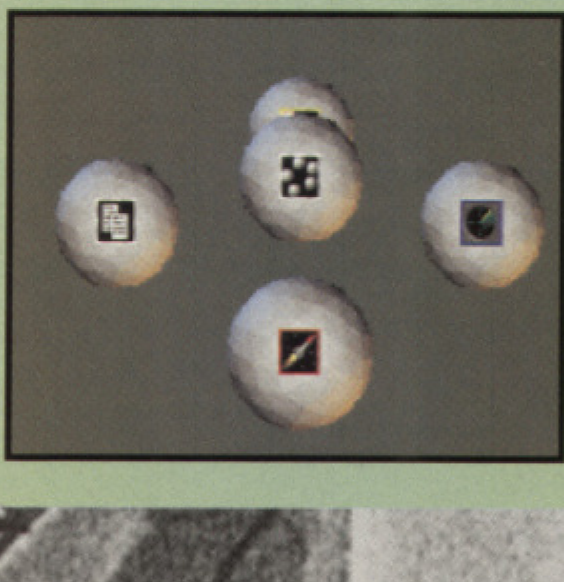






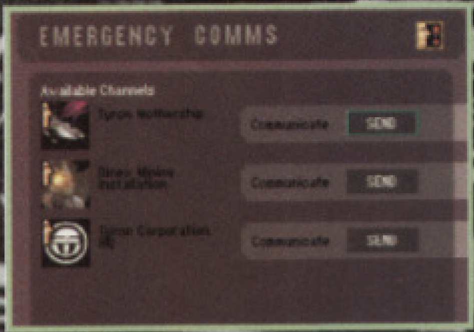
SPACEBALLS

The automation system on MRP-6F is structured on a series of terminals called VOS. These use a graphic interface of spinning golf balls with menus set within menus. Not all functions are open to users without the correct access. There are VOS terminals on most floors, but the one set in the control room at the top of the admin block controls several key functions.





ECON



WRECK AND RECCE

Two priorities for the budding base manager are operating the defence system and recovering items from downed attackers. The base is defended by six laser/missile turrets. These operate automatically, but you can override this and control any turret, either by travelling to it, or using the remote monitor in the control room. After an attack, you commission droids to recover useful items.













COMMUNICATIONS

- LOCAL COMMS
- EXTERNAL COMMS
- EMERGENCY COMMS

ARCHIVES

- NAVIGATION
- TYRON CORPORATION
- MXC CORPORATION
- DINEX CORPORATION
- MISCELLANEOUS

TACTICAL

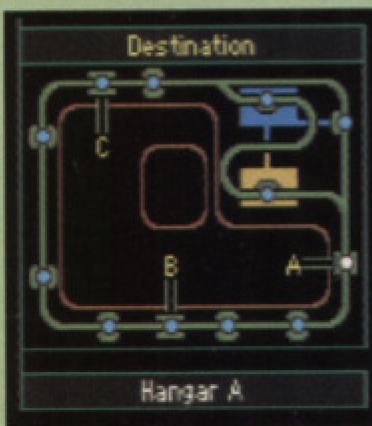
- SELF DESTRUCT
- FACILITIES
- STATION MAP
- BASE STATUS

OPERATIONS

- OPERATIONAL STATUS
- DROID SYSTEMS

DEFENCE SYSTEMS

- DEFENCE STATUS
- TURRET CONTROL
- SOFTWARE CONTROL



The limo track with each drop-off point marked.

WATCH YOUR BACK

When the base is infiltrated, armoured mechanisms will seek you out tirelessly. These berserkers become more vicious in time and fire-fights ensue. Fortunately, the station maps on the VOS show their location, and the intercom issues warnings. However, firing weapons pollutes the surrounding air, and eventually areas of the base will be sealed off for poor air quality.

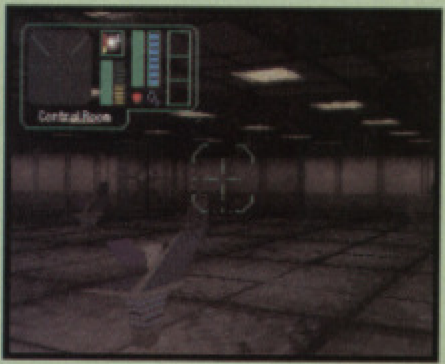


You can zoom in on your location. Note the darker areas with poor air quality.



VIRTUAL REALTY

The MRP-6F base spans a wide area, which needs to be covered for the purposes of completing the mission. The main action is centred in the twin admin/domestic blocks, which cover seven floors. Use the signs and decor to orientate yourself, although it's easy to get hopelessly lost. The peripheral service levels, hangers and turrets are serviced by a fast 'limo' service, with access on the second level of the main blocks.



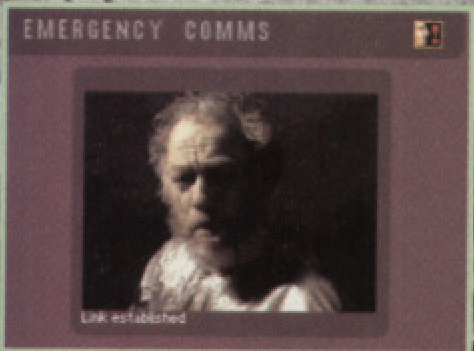




Erm, this is a corridor. The Tyron Corporation are big on corridors.



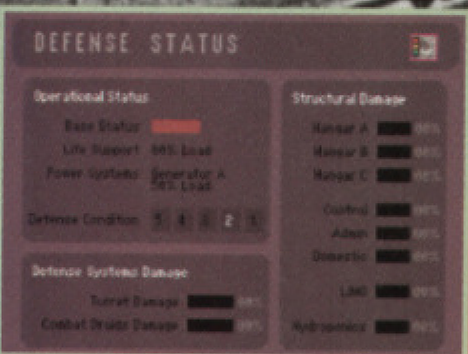
Erm, this is a three-legged alien. They're not so big on these.







The shape of your Recce droids, sent out to retrieve whatever the downed ships contain.



More menus than the average 300-seater Julie's Pantry, making Defcon 5 a tough game to get into.





COMMENT



GUS

Defcon 5 is a great idea and I was as enthused by it as the game's designers when I visited Millennium to see it. Unfortunately, I see it only appealing to a small niche of gamers, with most others becoming annoyed and frustrated. The game is so non-linear in design that it's bewildering. The detail on the 3-D is also quite poor and moving around some of the narrower areas with huge pixilated textures in your face is disconcerting. It never quite sells on the Doom aspect, or indeed, the external shooting scenes. You'll find immense satisfaction discovering the intricacies of the defence software or locating the self-destruct key if you like mind-based games. If you go for Myst or D or such like, Defcon 5 will be a refreshing and innovative experience, but otherwise beware.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Much like the recently reviewed Cyberia this is a patchy attempt to combine RPG gameplay with shoot 'em up action. Much like Cyberia, the result is lacking in the more action-orientated sections. The cinematic feel to the sequences requiring base navigation/negotiation is excellent and genuinely atmospheric. Which makes the 'rough around the edges' feel of the base defence sequences all the more jarring. This is, however, successful in enough quarters to deserve attention from anyone demanding a cerebral long-term challenge. And any observant movie buffs, who are likely to marvel at a catalogue of 'homage' that would put Quentin Tarantino to shame.

GRAPHICS 73

▲Well devised intro sequence. Effective menu and computer presentation.
▼The space battles and base interiors are poor.

ANIMATION 51

▼No scenery movement makes the base look fake and flat.

MUSIC 76

▲Atmospheric music pops up at the right times.

EFFECTS 79

▲The gameplay makes good use of a voice.
▼Skipping menus breaks off important messages.

PLAYABILITY 72

▲Intriguing and different.
▼Also, slow and bewildering. Too subtle.

LASTABILITY 78

▲The mission is cunningly structured, and not too obvious.
▼Defcon 5 has a strong frustration factor.

OVERALL

Millennium make a bold stroke with a game that breaks new ground. But don't quite pull it off.

74



SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

GAME PRO		ULTIMATE		GAMES MASTER		C&VG			
Thunderhawk 2	92%	Actua Soccer	93%	MK3	94%	Zero Divide	91%	Tekken	97%
Fifa '96	91%	Ridge Racer Revolution	91%	Street Fighter Alpha	93%	Disc World	93%	Raiden	90%
Krazy Ivan	92%	Descent	91%	Actua Soccer	96%	Destruction Derby	94%	Toshinden	96%
Actua Soccer	93%	NBA JAM	91%	Total NBA '96	96%	Loaded	92%	Ridge Racer	96%
Total NBA '96	92%					Wipeout	96%	Doom	93%

PlayStation™



BY SEGA

RELEASE MARCH

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1 **PLAYERS**

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

The game has a 'Core feel' to it, and definitely pays tribute to the seminal Atari Battlezone coin-op.

GAME AIM

25 different missions with a similar theme: destroy or crush everything in your path!

BEAT THIS

150,000 (level 5)

Yo ma man, how good of you to come. S'like, many moons we've been waiting for your 'Shellshock' to come. So just chill and put on that there Saturn... Right, forget it. We are all, in fact, terribly British here at MEAN MACHINES. Unlike our friends at Core in Derby, we don't take to spraying graffiti on gable ends, wearing dog tags and 'eating twinkies'.

This Americana is really not acceptable in the Farringdon area of London, where the closest we get to Stateside is a Zinger meal deal. There's also not a lot of call for tanks around here, although bombs are something we occasionally experience.

It was, in that case, more culture- than Shell- shock to come across Core's heavily styled tank battle game. The background to the action are various 'ongoing international situations' which sounds very much like the protracted producion history of this very piece of software. But it's ready, and now is the time to, though we loathe to say it, 'Kick Ass'.



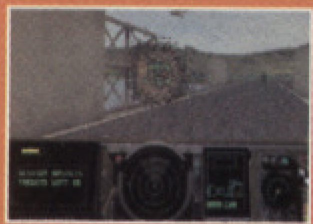


IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

Initially, mission objectives are simple, but as the missions progress, you are expected to achieve more subtle objectives such as hostage recovery and convoy elimination. Each mission is preceded by a detailed analysis and background report delivered by 'The Man'. This figure is your mysterious Commander-in-Chief, who apparently has global crusading instincts aimed at tackling genocide, drugs, territorial disputes etc. Of course, in the world of Shellshock this can all be settled satisfactorily from behind the barrel of a gun.

SEEK AND DESTROY

Easy mission, Bosnia scenario with very East European civil architecture. Wander around the town seeking the tank units.





TRASH COMPOUNDS

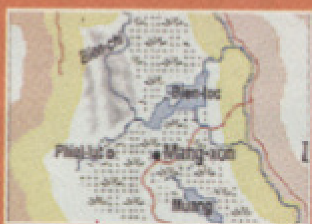
Frenzy of destruction if you can breach the tank defences and the flimsy corruagated iron fence. Lots of bonus crates located in debris of enemy infrastructure.





HOSTAGE RESCUE

Marsh lands provide particular hazards as tank is prone to sinking and erratic control. Human shields held in secluded compounds protected by land and sea defences.





ELIMINATE CONVOY

A staple of any Core game — find the moving convoy and knock it out. Made more complex by the heavy tree cover and armour lying-in-wait.















SHELLSHOCK





I'M GONNA GET YOU SUCKA

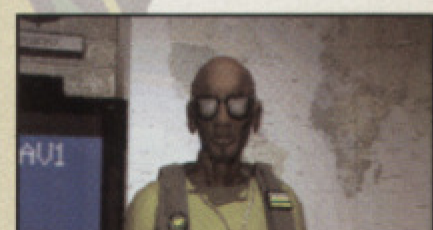
Action is viewed from a first-person tank-top perspective (not a reference to early 80s fashion attire). Although the tank rotates and moves forward conventionally, it is possible to spin the turret without changing the direction of movement. This technique comes in useful later on, when enemy tanks are more sophisticated in their tactics. Other areas of interest in the turret are the compass and radar. These are particularly important because many levels involve heavy foliage cover, so working out where you are going and what stands in your way is easier to do using these devices. A further curio is the tactical map, which depicts a plan view of the tank with all objects shown as simple vectors. Designed as a nav device, it looks more like an early video game and you can actually play the game here in realtime. Check it aht!







Meet the cast: a bunch of Pulp Fiction wannabes with a Blade Runner fixation.



HI-TOPS

If you're customising, here are the options:

EXTRA ARMOUR
Sustain more damage before pulling out.



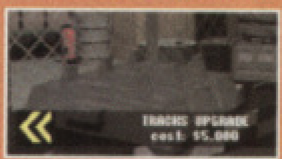
TARGETTING COMPUTER
Improve aim and distance with assisted sights.



RELOAD MECHANISM
Reduce 'dead' time between shots.



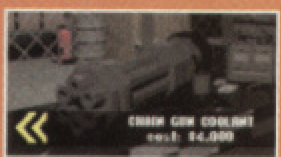
TRACK UPGRADE
Counter the effect of slide on poor terrains.



SAM
Missile specifically for use against helicopters.



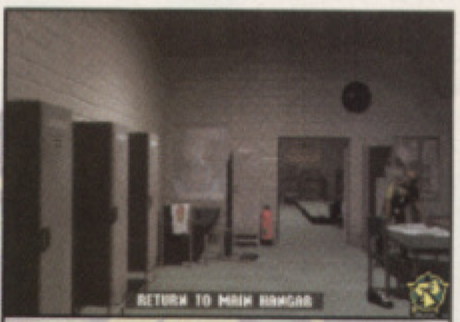
CHAIN GUN COOLANT
Extend the firing window of your small arm.



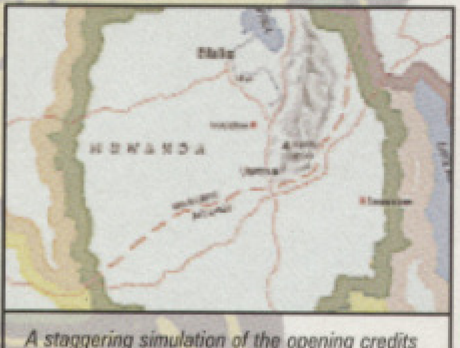
AIR COVER
Huge payoff for a one-off cluster bombing.



To pay for all these goodies, pick up the crates hidden away on most levels.



This room doubles as an option screen, saved games being stored in the lockers. Click on the open doorway for a briefing.



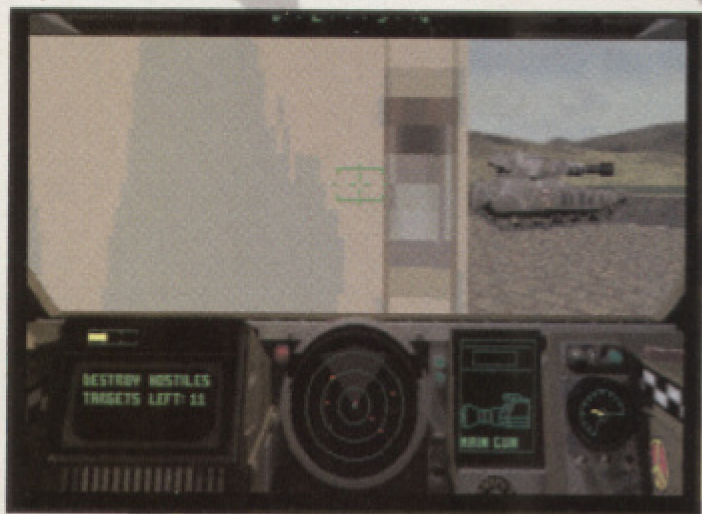
A staggering simulation of the opening credits from Dad's Army, the sassy Shellshock team battling Bosch across Europe. Probably.

STREET TALK

Odd. That's the best description for the interlude scenes which feature dialogue between other Wardenz. The discussions are irrelevent to the missions, really their meant to be Tarantino-esque musings about life's little details, much like the infamous 'Royale with Cheese' speech from Pulp Fiction and the 'Like a Virgin' round table natter from Reservoir Dogs. Does it work in a video game? No comment...









COMMENT



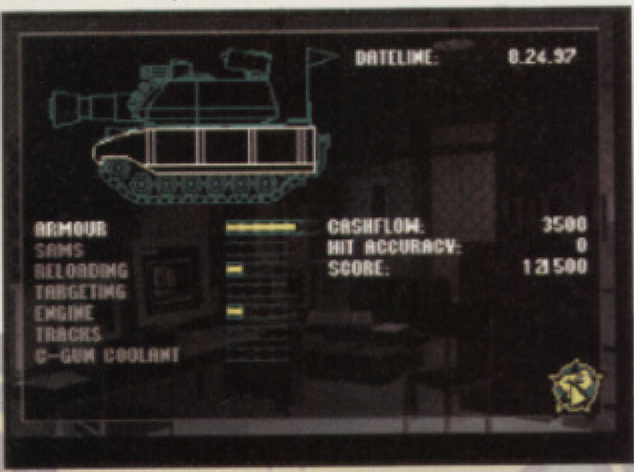
MARCUS

Immediately accessible and quick to reward, Shellshock is initially quite alluring. The intro (and outro) sequences are impressive, marred only by banal dialogue that only goes to show that emulating the work of a certain Oscar-winning writer isn't as easy as someone seems to think. Scratch away the admittedly impressive intro veneer and you'll find a relatively unsophisticated game underneath. Gameplay is repetitive, any acquired skills being less useful than grim perseverence in the face of some very dim-witted opposition. The rather dated-looking graphics similarly let down a concept that could have been a lot more arresting with some more attention lavished on its execution. The most positive thing to say about this is that it sounds excellent, explosions and music adding an extra dimension to the undemanding action. However, next time I want to listen to two blokes banging on about how cream cakes are smaller than they used to be I think I'll visit my local bun shop.

HANGIN' WITH THE HOMEBOYS

Shellshock's heavily trailed plot development reminds you of being part of a team (though the other members are never in evidence on the field). Between missions, you can drift around 'Da Wardenz' American base, talking to your brothers in arms, using their skills and taking their caustic advice.









COMMENT



GUS

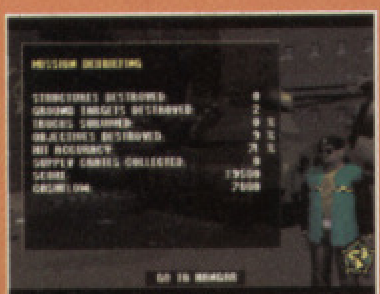
For every Cinderella there's an ugly sister, and sadly Thunderhawk 2's cosmetically-challenged sibling is Shellshock. The games appear to have more in common than they actually do. Shellshock is a less involved, more immediate style of gameplay, reminiscent of the old coin-op Battlezone. There's a fair amount of fun to be had just rolling off in search of mayhem. Certain factors tend to irritate. Enemy tanks tend to sit and wait for you to approach, so creeping along is a laborious but safe way to plough through overly difficult levels. The turret control is unsatisfactory and changing the controls in the tank doesn't give you another method of squaring the turret direction with the tank direction (only the default mode has this). Tank and turret are often confusingly out of synch. And the graphics, it has to be said, are much poorer than Thunderhawk. The use of a scrolling bit-map terrain produces speed, but the payoffs are monotonously flat terrain and wibbly sprite scrolling. One thing further, the 'dialogue' sequences fall embarrassingly flat with neither the flair or insight of a Tarantino to integrate them in the action. Ironically, it's not the styling of Shellshock that most appeals — it's a portion of the bare bones gameplay.



"Wow man, way to go!" "That's the way to do it!" and similar 'encouragement' from your navigator are enough enticement to contemplate a suicide mission after a few minutes.

SHACK ATTACK

Shellshock's boast is that just about anything can be destroyed in the game. We got TV's That's Life team to test that claim and here's what their spokesman, Gavin Campbell, said: "Yes, indeed, when playing Shellshock we found we could blow just about everything to buggery — tanks, bridges, state-provided housing. We can't fault the claim". What Gavin failed to mention was the depth-cued explosions which are some of the most thundersome ever heard in a video game.





GRAPHICS — 75

▲Nice explosions and some element of warzone character. Nice styling of the Wardenz base.
▼ Too oppressively drab in places.

ANIMATION — 70

▲Fast scrolling.
▼Precious little animation in the interlude scenes. Unpolished pop-up of sprites.

MUSIC — 89

▲A lot of time spent on a comprehensive hip-hop soundtrack. Very professional.

EFFECTS — 85

▲Excellent explosions and reports add a lot of character to the game.
▼As usual, samples are overused and become repetitive.

PLAYABILITY — 79

▲The principle of 'anything goes up' lends the game some manic destructive appeal.
▼Simply not as much strategy, freedom or fun as Thunderhawk 2.

LASTABILITY — 73

▲New ideas are incorporated to make the large amount of missions worth ploughing through.
▼Despite nuances, you're performing the same tasks.

OVERALL — 77

Our expectations are only partly fulfilled – Shellshock trundles rather than rumbles.



BY PSYGNOSIS

RELEASE APRIL

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE RACING

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
SAVE RECORDS

SKILL LEVELS
2

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

Anyone who knows anything about games will recognise the Playstation's star launcher. A very close conversion has followed.

GAME AIM

Be the fastest over seven courses. Learn new speeder tactics.

BEAT THIS

Terramax, Venom Class

What profession could be more trustworthy and respectable than Research Science? Timid men in white coats, more suited to waggling test tubes than enjoying social interaction or full-blooded pursuits. This would seem to be the conventional wisdom. But a wisdom challenged by a supressed Government report at the turn of the century, where the scandalous profligacies of scientists involved with Force Levitation propulsion were revealed. Huge public expense had gone into building test tracks and early prototype models, each built to order to test this new mode of high-speed transport. The team involved had failed to report any significant findings. Government agencies investigated. They were...racing them. Billions of Euros invested in a replacement for the motor car, and the finest minds were treating them like Go-Karts. In truth, Science had uncovered something much more interesting – a new sport.



THE RUSH

Wipeout speeders use twin engine/twin braking systems. Engines are synchronised, but the brakes may be applied individually for a sharp left or right turn. Alternatively, a more gentle bank effect can be performed with no loss of speed. In competition, speeders rely heavily on the speed pads placed on the track. Passing over these in sequences boosts the speeder to maximum velocity. The placing of pads has been deliberate to test player skill and familiarity with the course layout. Utilising at least some of these is essential to success.









wip®

LEAP OF FAITH

Managing the many jumps in Wipeout is essential to success. The game is played as much on the vertical axis as the horizontal. Key to dealing with racing in the air is the pitch of the speeder's nose, controlled by up/down on the pad. The speeder responds to pilot controls: a push forward will lower the nose, optimising the aerodynamic shape and increasing maximum speed. Pulling back will raise the nose, expose more area of the underside and consequently lower speed. The dividend is a gliding motion that increases length and distance in the air. A secondary advantage of pitching the nose comes in accentuated dips/rises in the elevation of the track. In the former, lowering the nose will improve speed on the fall, on the latter, pulling the nose up will avoid it scraping along the track, reducing speed. Let's examine some instances.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

The latter course features forks in your route with alternative sections of track. In Korodera and Arridos at least, these are more to test reactions, but in Silverstream the dual sections of the track are quite substantial and have to be learned separately. Forks are the ideal place to overtake a troublesome leader who is good at blocking.















1. ULTIMA 7 DANGER LEAP

The game's first jump, letting you experience the dynamics of air racing, but as the track continues underneath there is virtually no risk (unless you foolishly choose to use a speed up as you takeoff and have a close encounter with the cliff face.) The trick is to push the nose forward as soon as you leave the upper level.

2. ULTIMA 7 U-BEND

This sharp rise comes directly after the 'Danger Leap' and is the perfect example of how a rising slope can destroy precious momentum. It's clearly marked with warning stripes – prior to these is the best point to raise the nose for best effect. Later rises in the game come before crucial jumps and are less easily identified.

3. TERRAMAX BRIDGE JUMP

The second leap on the Terramax course and the most important element of the track. Preparation from the jump comes from raising the nose on the final approach to avoid speed loss, and maintaining it for the first portion of the jump for distance. The crucial change point comes when pushing the nose forward to reinstate speed as soon as possible.

4. ARRIDOS HOME LEAP

Arridos features one of the most exhilirating and useful jumps in the whole game. Set on the very final turn, an artificial ramping raises the track high above the level on the other side. There is little danger of losing the speeder in the chasm, and every opportunity to gain a huge advantage by using a speed-up at this specific point, which will catapult you well over the line.

HARD GRAFT

A reward weapon system operates on the tracks. Pads contain randomised weapon power-ups, relayed as symbols on the speeder heads up display. Passing over a pad is all that is necessary to attain its power. Once installed, weapons have a single use, though this may be replenished. Only one charge may be carried at any time. When other craft use weapons in the vicinity of the player, he/she will be warned by an audible signal, detailing the weapon used.



ROCKET
Standard offensive device. When fired, a rocket will continue in a straight line until impact with a vehicle or wall (thus must be aimed). The effect on vehicles is loss of speed and disruption of trajectory.



MISSILE
Advanced rocket design. Missiles have on board targetting and will seek out opponents in front of the player craft. To be effective, missiles must be locked on before launch (denoted by a small tracking rhomboid on heads up). Effect is similar, though pronounced, to rocket.



SHOCKWAVE
Mistaken for missile, but different effects employed. Shockwave features similar tracking device as missile for lock on, but has a primarily disruptive effect on targets, by interupting systems (induces a characteristic 'bouncing motion'). Shockwaves are tactical weapons best employed in areas where handling is paramount.



MINES
The only system to protect speeder rear. Activated, a stream of primed mines is ejected from the back of the speeder. Contact with these results in an explosion, speed loss and disruption. The trail nature of mines allows spreading tactics at narrow points in the course.



SHIELD
The speeder's multi-purpose defensive measure. Shields will protect with an electromagnetic aura for some seconds. They have no effect on performance, although no weapons may be used through a shield.



SPEED UP
Potent, short burst of power doubles velocity almost instantly, though return to normal velocity is almost as rapid. The effect is useful for crossing chasms, escaping pursuers and overtaking, but the extra demands on control require careful and considered use.



Wipeout offers every possible amenity to drivers – here we see one cash-strapped contestant racing for the nearest Midland cashpoint.



The snowy wastes affect handling not one jot, but provide some attractive scenery to admire on your journey.















In true 'Look and Learn' tradition, Wipeout predicts a future where we all go to work in hovercraft. And live on the moon.











COMMENT



GUS

Initial pride and enthusiasm for the Wipeout conversion has been tempered by comments around me from those pointing out inferiorities to the Playstation. Not as clear, not as fast, not as smooth. Really? I wouldn't know. I couldn't care. I've been enjoying Wipeout for what it is as a Saturn game, and the deficiencies are so minor as to make no difference. The game has the immeasurable style, confidence and vigour of the original and a fair slice of gameplay too. It also, we must confess, kicks the crap out of Hi-Octane. Wipeout's strengths are its incredible graphics and superb handling, with a racing style based on floating braking which is quite unique. However, it is neither as rewarding or as well structured as AM3's Sega Rally. That is no real slander since the Sega game is exceptional, whereas as Wipeout is merely brilliant. As a conversion it is a couple of paces behind the PSX version and miles ahead of the PC CD-ROM edition.

COMMENT



STEVE

Having never played the original Wipeout on the Playstation before I played this version, I had nothing to compare it too, so I took it for what it is. And what it is, is a damn fine racing game. The feeling of rushing around the courses is superb, and I really felt like I was getting up a full head of steam, motoring round the bends. Also, the thumping music soundtracks really add to the enjoyment. And it's hard as well, which means that it'll never leave your Saturn disc tray. But after this, I did get a quick go of the Playstation version, and although I agree with what Gus said about judging this as a game in its own right, the simple fact is that most of the Saturn owners interested in Wipeout will want to know one thing: Is it better than the Sony version? And the simple answer is that it isn't. Not by much, but enough. However, it is still Wipeout, and as a result is always going to be a top game.

DRIVETIME

Wipeout's Techno soundtrack is so integral to the game that it features in nearly every evaluation. Music by Sony-signed artists Leftfield/ Chemical Bros. has been scratched off the track listing, but the remaining line-up is formidable. Literally pop-tastic.





GRAPHICS 93

▲Strangely, tracks which are so convincingly good as racing environments you almost take them for granted.

ANIMATION 92

▲The essential items are faultless: fast and fluid update, and the essence of a levitating vehicle captured superbly

MUSIC 95

▲One of Wipeout's strongest suits – an array of sequenced tracks that are the spirit of the game.

▼Pop pundits would have liked those 'name' tracks.

EFFECTS 87

▲The crowd is always elated.

▼None of the effects or speech play as effective a role as the music.

PLAYABILITY 91

▲However strange the control feels at first, you know you are into something unique and intriguing. An immersive experience.

LASTABILITY 90

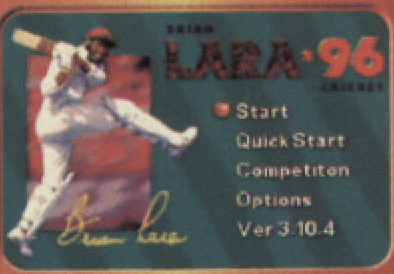
▲Wipeout's complex control and challenging courses leave room for constant improvement.

▼Easy access to all but one track. Bad move.

OVERALL

Perpetual motion. Constant improvement. Wipeout is the Saturn's new driving force.

91



BY: CODEMASTERS

RELEASE: MAY

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: CRICKET

1-4 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
SAVE GAME

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
OK

ORIGIN

The original Brian Lara Cricket was one of the best-selling Megadrive games last year. A sequel was inevitable.

GAME AIM

Run up a pitch, throw a ball at three sticks, then wait ten minutes before you do it all again.

BEAT THIS

134 FOR ENGLAND

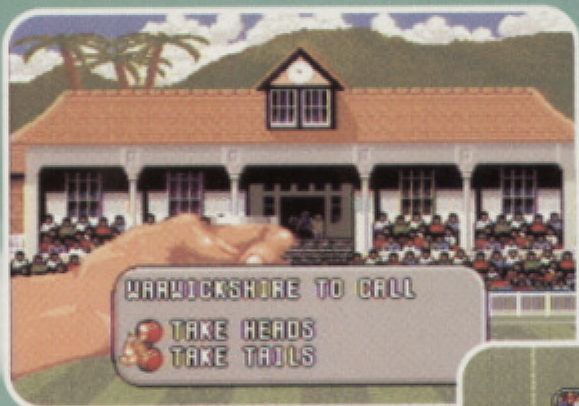


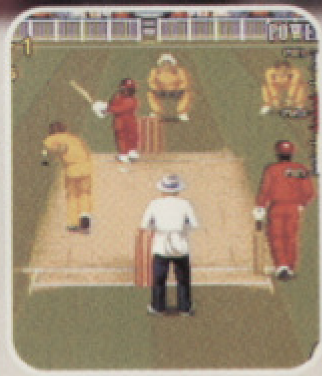
Even if you say you hate cricket, there is one piece of cricket commentary that you should have heard by now. It's even pretty funny. Lets just recreate it for you. It's an idyllic county cricket scene, picturesque countryside alive with the cheerful chirps of birds in trees. The Persil-white uniforms of the umpires mingle with the families scattered around the stadium, straining for any sort of view. Then the bowler runs up to the wicket, and we hear a classic line of commentary: "The bowlers Holding, the batsman's Willey." Fnurg!
Fantastic. Multiple chuckles all round. The only thing worth watching cricket for in our humble opinion. However, since the arrival of Brian Lara Cricket, there has been another good reason to partake in the otherwise dull bat and ball sport. Thanks to Codemasters, one of the most boring games on Earth became the third-best-selling Megadrive game of last year. And now they've returned, to dash any hopes of anybody ever stealing their crown. Brian Lara returns to iron out all of the problems, and add a ton more to make this the definitive cricket sim. Even though it remains, in fact, the only one.

BOWL A GOOGLY

The game features all the 18 County Cricket teams, with a complete set of statistics for each of them which include all of the '95 season results. It also has a version of the recent Cricket World Cup, complete with all the teams who participated available for selection. With each of these teams you can pick any of the 15 or so players from the squad, and change the order in which they bat and field. If you are also having a bit of trouble getting to grips with the game then there is a practice feature that takes you down to the warm up nets, and lets you tackle any form of bowling until you become as good as Brian.









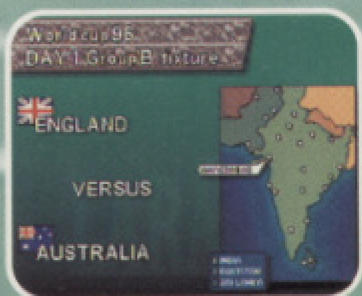




YOUR HISTORY



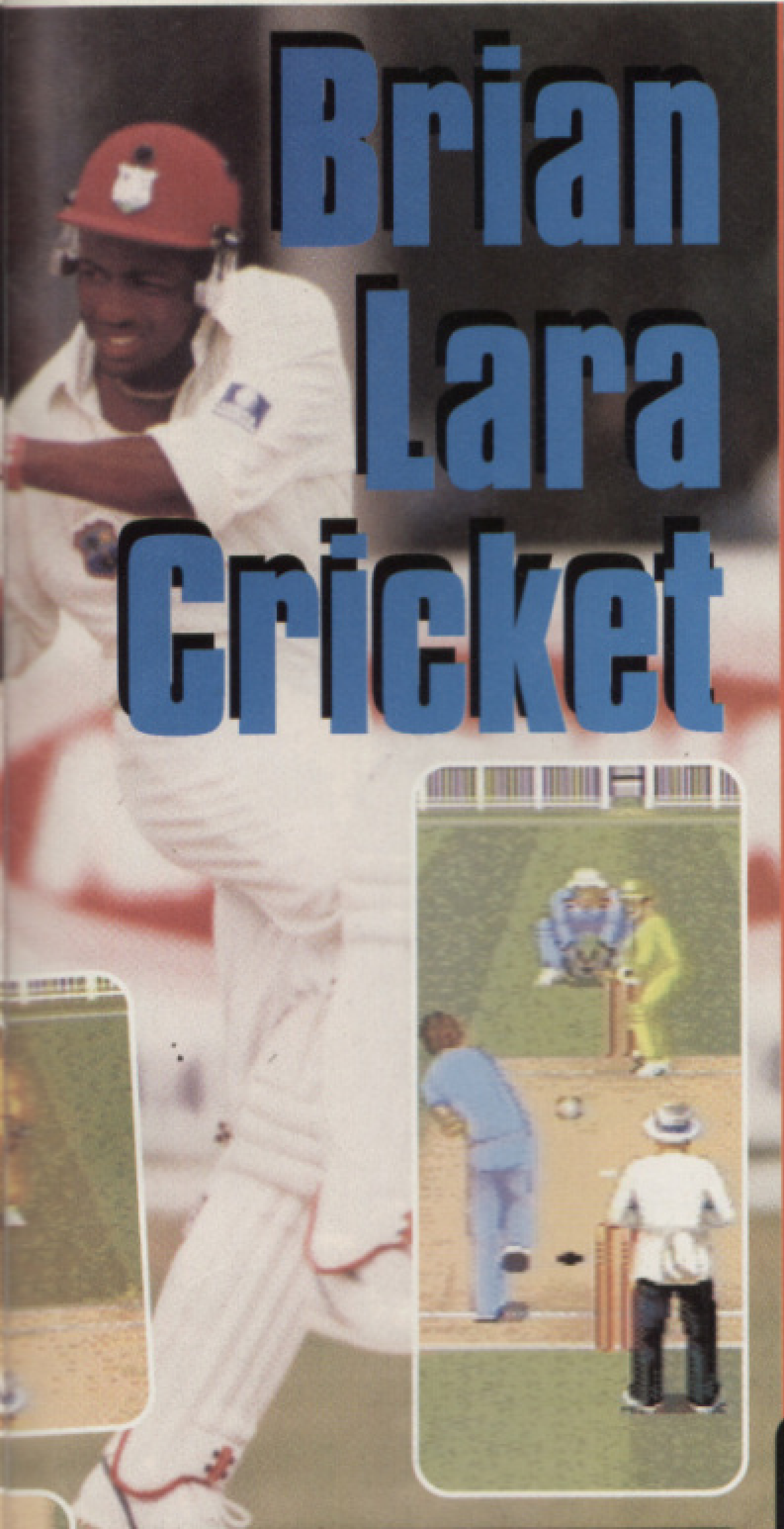
Feeling a bit nostalgic are we? Well then let this game take you back in time to some of the most memorable (if there is such a thing) cricket matches that have graced the batting strips across the globe. If you fancy taking the roll of 'Beefy' Botham in his awesome innings that single handedly rescued the England team from the brink of defeat, then you can. Or if the chance of completing the record-breaking 501 from Mr. Lara himself is your idea of fun, then guess what? This game will let you. Other Historic games include Lara's other record stand of 375 for the West Indies against England and the Nat West Trophy Final from 1993.











Brian Lara Cricket

BOYCOTT STYLE

At the start of any cricket match on the BBC, you always get Jeffrey Boycott and his half-moving mouth giving a pointless description of how the pitch is going to hold up, and how it will affect the bowlers' swerve, swing and spin. Even though 'Boycs' isn't in this version, the same pitch data is. And it makes a difference to your bowling. The harder and drier the pitch, the more pace and bounce you'll get with the faster bowlers, and the spinners and swingers get a lot more turn. Likewise when you meet a damper pitch, the movement of all the bowlers is dramatically reduced.





There's a secret subgame of 'Do this, do that' if you score 500 runs not out.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Once more, the mighty Codemasters prove the power of putting gameplay first and succeed in making as abstract a concept as Megadrive cricket entertaining. The question on everyone's minds is 'Do I buy this if I already own the original Brian Lara Cricket?' The answer, in my opinion is yes. While the gameplay is not massively overhauled (the fielders' more realistic behaviour is the most obvious improvement) the wealth of extra options tip the scales in this version's favour – there are County Cricket players, classic matches to complete, practice nets and numerous different styles of play that are all absent from the original. If you're not interested in playing cricket on your Megadrive then nothing's going to convince you, but if you're looking to upgrade then this is well worth a look. And if you missed the first Brian Lara, this is a good chance to rectify your mistake.

COMMENT



STEVE

Admittedly, the screenshots of this game make it look exactly the same as its older brother, but rest assured my friends that this is miles better than the original. Every little fault that I could pick out from the first game appears to have been removed from this version, and it is as near to a perfect Megadrive cricket sim as you could have possibly hoped for. The graphics are not great, but they do their required job well, making it feel pretty realistic with the good animation. And the levels of the opponents have been adjusted so that it's bloody easy on Sunday league, and impossible on World Class, meaning that once you've mastered one setting the others are there to test you out again. And the fielders actually drop catches! It was inevitable that every time in Lara 1 that as soon as a shot went in the air, you were out, but not this time. The main problem out of all this is that the one player mode can become pretty tedious if you're not good enough, so stick with it and you'll be rewarded with enjoyment of Lara at his best.

GRAPHICS — 80

▲ The presentation is good...
▼...but the overall graphics don't seem as polished as they could be.

ANIMATION — 87

▲ The bowlers and the batters all move realistically...
▼...but fielders look a bit rough.

MUSIC — 90

▲ The remixed versions of the BBC cricket theme and Rule Britannia are fab man!

EFFECTS — 88

▲ A few claps and cheers and of course the 'Howzat!'

PLAYABILITY — 90

▲ Top stuff in the multi player mode...
▼...but can become a little tedious in one player games.

LASTABILITY — 91

▲ With all the different variations of cricket available, this will last quite a while.

OVERALL — 90

The success of the first game looks set to continue with this version – Lara 2 hits us for six!



BY: CAPCOM

RELEASE: APRIL

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

BREAKDOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
8

RESPONSIVENESS
BRILLIANT

ORIGIN

This game is actually set after Street Fighter 1, but before SF2, hence some of the older characters make a return.

GAME AIM

First knead the dough into the shape of a man. Well, if you don't know what to do by now, then you probably bake little men anyway.

BEAT THIS

Finish on Level 5.



Pay attention readers. I am Hal. Mrs Hal Itosis, your new history teacher. I'm taking over from the your Welsh teacher Di Arrhoea for today's lesson – not only will I melt all of your exercise books by breathing on them, but I will also tell you how life on earth began. First came man. The only living form on the planet to have developed the ability set light to its own farts. Then came woman. The only living form on the planet who would accept marriage proposals from man. Then, in a blaze of light above the Capcom star came Streetfighter, the arcade game.

This gaming phenomena has quite rightly gone down in history as the most popular beat 'em up game EVER. In fact, it has only been equalled by its numerous sequels. Which makes the fact that this game's release generated hardly any publicity all the more surprising. And if you turn to page 986 in your Cobblers text books, you'll see the 11th commandment, which reads 'Thou shalt not Ignore Street Fighter Alpha.' And so, let that be be a lesson to you all. Street Fighter is awesome. But now, in the Cobblers revised history book, from pages 1,345 onwards, you'll see a new chapter dedicated to the latest version, Street Fighter Alpha. If this little beauty receives the publicity it deserves, then prepare to be brainwashed. That concludes my lesson, so for homework play the game and let Capcom give you a lesson in 2-D fighting games. It'll be one you won't forget...





Check out Guy and Sodom doing their Jarvis Cocker and Micheal Jackson impressions over there. Due to the explicit nature of Guy's actions, we are unable to show actual footage. So we cut it.



COUNTER TEN

In a bid to stop the more 'cheesy' players stringing together loads of unblockable combos, Capcom have added a new range of moves, known as Alpha Counters. These work in a similar way to the counters from VF2, breaking up opponents' attacks and hitting them with a move of you own, giving you the advantage. Each of the characters has one counter, and to execute them is easy. Whilst holding Back on the joypad (i.e. blocking), wait until your enemy has waded in with a hit, and as soon as it connects, rotate from Back to down and press either punch or kick (it varies depending on who you have chosen). The downside to this is that it takes away one of your super bar levels, but it's often worth it in tense situations.









SUPER! SUPER! SUPER!

The biggest showpiece of the game is undoubtedly the Super Move. These super-extravagent, dolled up versions of the standard moves can inflict impressive damage on unsuspecting opponents if pulled off at the right time, and can make you feel like the smuggest gamesplayer on Earth. By executing the move when your opposing fighter's energy has diminished to the lower levels of panicdom, the final blobs drain away and you are rewarded with much jubilation as the screen flashes wildly to show your supreme victory. A word of warning, however: don't try these moves on someone who is (a) bigger than you, (b) harder than you, or (c) both of those, as you are likely to get your head kicked in for being a flash get.



















It's all legs and arms as Claire attends another of her Thai Chi classes and gets it all wrong, AGAIN!! One more time...

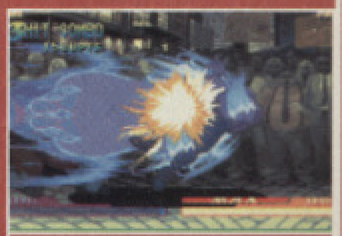


THE HIDDEN: PART 3

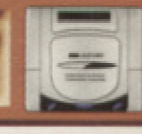
The ten fighters on offer aren't the only ones you can play with in the game. Once you manage to get through to Bison, he becomes a playable character once defeated. Akuma (or Gouki for those who have got the import version) can be accessed by finishing every fight, i.e your second winning round with a super move, and when you get to your final character, he will appear to fight you. The third warrior is Dan, who is a little trickier to find. You must win five fights in a row, without continuing, and at the end of every fight, hold Up, and the first two punch buttons. He will then appear to fight against you. Of course, there are easier ways to do this, with a selection of cheats that we already have at our disposal. But you'll have to wait until next month to discover them.







Check out Marcus in the background here. Nice tie mate.



NO, IT CAN'T BE. ALREADY?

Yes, as you may or may not have guessed from that heading, the sequel is already well underway, surprisingly titled Street Fighter Alpha 2. So what's new? Well for a start all of the characters from this game are in it, and a few more of the old batch make a welcome return. Zangief is back, as is Dhalsim, and another Final Fight character is also going to make an appearance in this game. Remember the army guy who chucked loads of grenades about the place? Well it's him and he's called Rolento just in case you were wondering. We'll have more news on this as and when we get it.



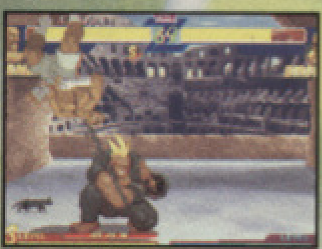








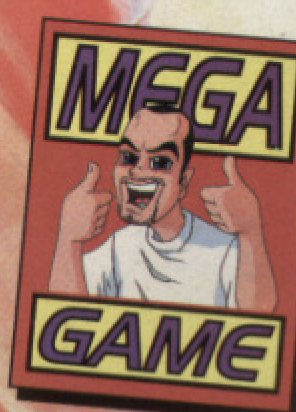


















All this space and nothing to write. I know, here's a joke. How many SF warriors does it take to change a light bulb? None. They're so rock hard that they'll fight in the dark. Well, it filled up the space anyway...





COMMENT



STEVE

Wow. Awesome. Mum, a new pair of pants for me if you please. What a fantastic game. There isn't much around at the moment that I can say that about and mean it 100%. The Saturn has already been spoilt by X-Men, and now this has arrived it is surely secure for a long time to come.

If X-Men was pure bash-at-the-buttons type action, then this is pure gameplay. It's one of the few games that I want to keep practising at so I can improve my combo tactics, learn opponents' moves and their weaknesses. I don't know how to stress this enough, but even if you are tired of Streetfighter in general, as I was before this came in, ignore your first impressions and go straight for the jugular. This will hook you in every way. The whole game engine has a new feel to it, with enough differences from the other versions to mean everyone will be pleased – the graphics and moves are redefined, and the level bar now has 3 stages for extra power, and three chances for special moves. If I had to find fault with this, then it would have to be that it took too long to get an official release, but hey, we can't have everything!

COMMENT



MARCUS

The reason this game's release was so low key is simple – people are tired of the never-ending Streetfighter saga and are looking elsewhere for their beat 'em up thrills. I'm not a particular fan of 2-D beat 'em ups, and while I recognise that this is a fine game which represents a pinnacle in the Streetfighter series, I still found it much less hospitable, less inventive and a great deal less charismatic than X-Men. I actually regarded X-Men's 'bash-at-the-buttons' style as a genuine virtue, and have little interest in spending long hours twisting my fingers into new contortions to learn new special moves. Steve and I are at loggerheads over this one. Streetfighter addicts will doubtless feel born again after playing this. I concede that it's an engaging spin on well-worn theme, but feel it belongs in a rut I've long since lost interest in.

GET DOWN AND GIMME TEN!

The game benefits from having multiple options to play under, with the programmers avoiding the problem of having just the one game style. Obviously, there is the standard one player versus the computer mode, and the versus mode, where two human players can pit their wits against each other. But also included is training mode, which is perfect for learning the combos and moves for each character as it throws you in against a 'gormless' fighter who has infinite energy, and there is unlimited time, so you can spend as long as you like perfecting all your moves. We are assured there is another, hidden, option called the Dramatic Battle. This takes the form of Ryu AND Ken fighting Bison on a single background, as you would for a normal fight. Two human players can play against Bison, and they share the same energy bar, meaning that if one person is getting caned, then both the people are. Unfortunately, Ryu and Ken are the only characters who can fight Bison, but their similarity and easy moves mean that mega combos are possible, with both players ganging up on the other. Rest assured that as soon as we find out how to do it, we'll be printing it in the mag.

GRAPHICS 93
The silky graphical feel fits the game style perfectly. The game is also presented extremely well.

ANIMATION 94
Every frame that is in the arcade version is also in this. Is that a job well done or what?

MUSIC 91
There are some remixed original tunes and some new ones to tease your ears.

EFFECTS 92
'Had-Oh-Kens', or whatever he says, and all the faithful speech has been included.

PLAYABILITY 95
How can you put this down? So much to improve on and you always want to beat anyone who is 'better' than you.

LASTABILITY 94
It is rock hard on the hardest skill levels and then the challenge is there to master each of the characters.

OVERALL
A fantastic game that is worthy of everyone's attention. The beat 'em up king has returned to regain his throne.

94



BY: VIRGIN

RELEASE: OUT NOW

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: GOLF

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
CHALLENGING

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
OK

ORIGIN

It's golf, Jim, but not as we know it.

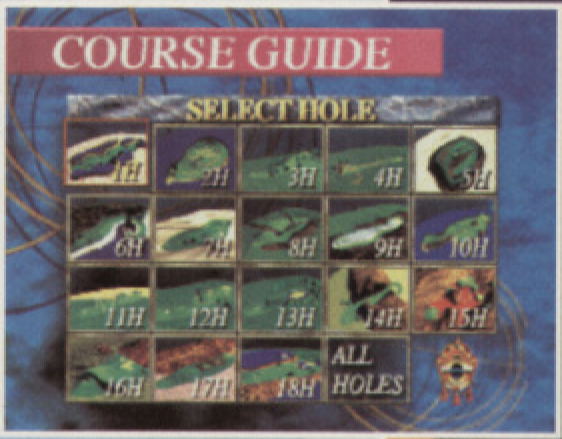
GAME AIM

Golf games, and the laws of physics, are turned on their heads by this sophisticated version of crazy golf.

BEAT THIS

4 UNDER PAR

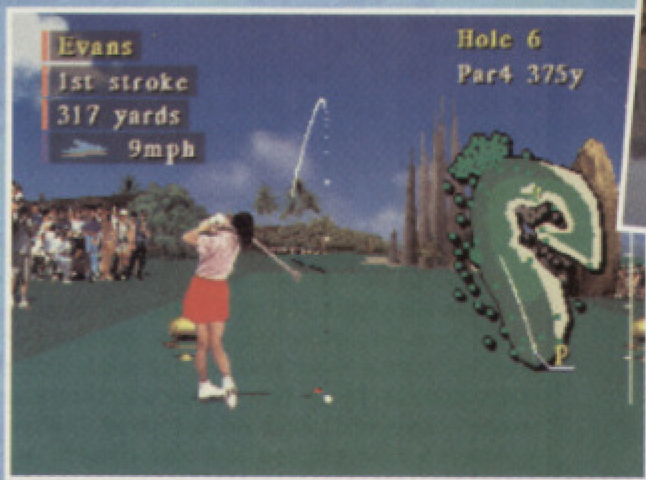
Last month we took you to Hell and back. Well, the Devil's Open tournament in our preview of Valora Valley Golf, to be precise. Vic Tokai's fantasy golf runaround is being released in the UK by Virgin, and looks set to make a curious bedfellow with more traditional golf titles, none of which have yet to receive an unqualified thumbs up.



So what makes Valora Valley so different? Well, not the game engine for a start – it's all highly reminiscent of Sega's seminal Pebble Beach Golf. That's where the similarities with traditional golf games end, however – Valora Valley is a bonkers twist on possibly the most boring leisure pursuit ever devised. Whereas golf is usually a leisurely stroll through gently rolling courses of immaculately tendered grass, Valora Valley is more like a thinly turfed assault course punctuated by the occasional lava pit and towering peninsula. Golf is stretched beyond all recognition as you are forced to negotiate your way through holes that play like pinball tables. At the Devil's Open, the last one back to the clubhouse gets fried alive...

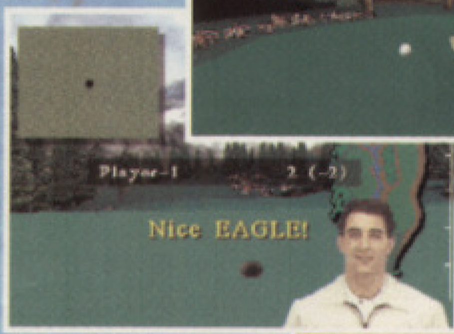














THE HOLE STORY

None of the holes in The Devil's Open are what you'd call conventional, but three of them present especially difficult landscapes to negotiate. Valora Valley is never harder than when it demands a ball to be knocked up steep inclines, across 'islands' or over sheer cliff faces – the second, fifth and eighteenth holes present all these challenges and more . . .



Knock your ball past the rabbit statue and up this bizarre 'wedding cake' arrangement.



The hardest hole on the course – knock the ball around this cliff face, and up on to the summit.



Go island-hopping here, knocking ball over the water and deadly lava lakes.



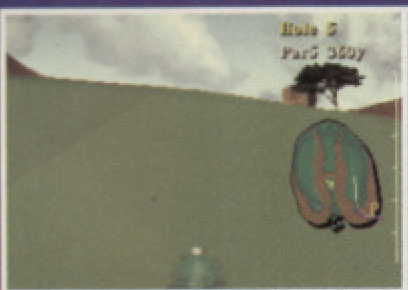
CLUB CLASS



If things get tricky, help is at hand in the shape of four 'special moves'. When the option to select some or all of these moves appears alongside your swing bar, halt your upward swing at precisely the top of the bar for the chance to select the move of your choice by stopping your swing alongside it on the way down.



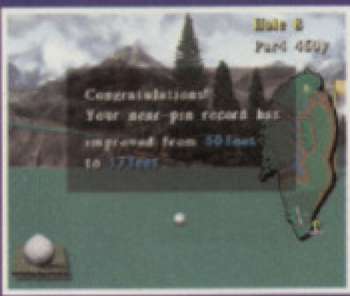
The fire option turns your ball into a blazing comet leaving a trail of fire over the course.



A truly bizarre option – cyclone sends your ball burrowing under the ground in search of its destination.

Psycho is to be used with caution – your ball becomes an unstoppable wobbly wonder and can easily fly clean off the course altogether.





Wherever you activate warp, it will teleport your ball onto the green, alongside the hole. This is by far the most useful option.

COMMENT



GUS

T&E Soft (the developers) have got their money's worth out of a game engine that was first Pebble Beach Golf and now this. Owners of Pebble Beach, which I liked, will see lots of similarity in look, design and play mechanics. If that doesn't put you off, then you should be impressed by the greater challenge and variety that a course as bizarre as Valora Valley offers. The imagination of the course designers has run riot, making this much more interesting than your average round.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Until this came along there was nothing that could tear me away from my favourite console golf – last year's PGA on the Megadrive. After the disappointment of World Cup Golf and the rather tatty-looking Virtual Golf, it was a relief to discover the slick-looking, and slick-playing, Valora Valley. The refreshing thing about this is that it can be enjoyed as straight golf or, by selecting the 'special moves' options, can have its fantasy elements exploited to the full. Tackled at either level this has all the playability and features you want from the game, combined with an uncommonly imaginative input into the design of the more outlandish holes. It's not all perfect, however – the caddies are condescending and three of the holes are simply annoying rather than challenging. Overall, this isn't radical enough to sway anyone with no interest in playing Saturn golf, but anyone else would be well advised to put this one top of the list.

GRAPHICS 85

▲Detailed and realistic, lending a real sense of scale to the course.
▼Water looks a little disappointing.

ANIMATION 78

▲Players' swings and sweeping tracking shots are smooth and detailed.

MUSIC 73

▲Introductory ditties that imbue some pace into the proceedings.

EFFECTS 75

▲Little to speak of, but the 'fire', 'psycho' and 'cyclone' effects are quite entertaining.

PLAYABILITY 86

▲The variety and extra options add a new dimension to the more traditional aspects of the game.
▼The 2nd, 5th and 15th holes are just too frustrating.

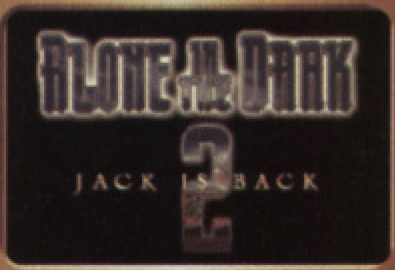
LASTABILITY 83

▲There's enough variety between the holes, and the routes and methods you can use to reach them, to maintain interest.

OVERALL

The Saturn's finest, and most imaginative, golf game yet.

84



BY INFOGRAMES

RELEASE OUT NOW (IMPORT)

PRICE IMPORT (£65)

GAME TYPE ADVENTURE

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
TOUGH

CONTINUES
SAVED GAME

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
AWKWARD

ORIGIN

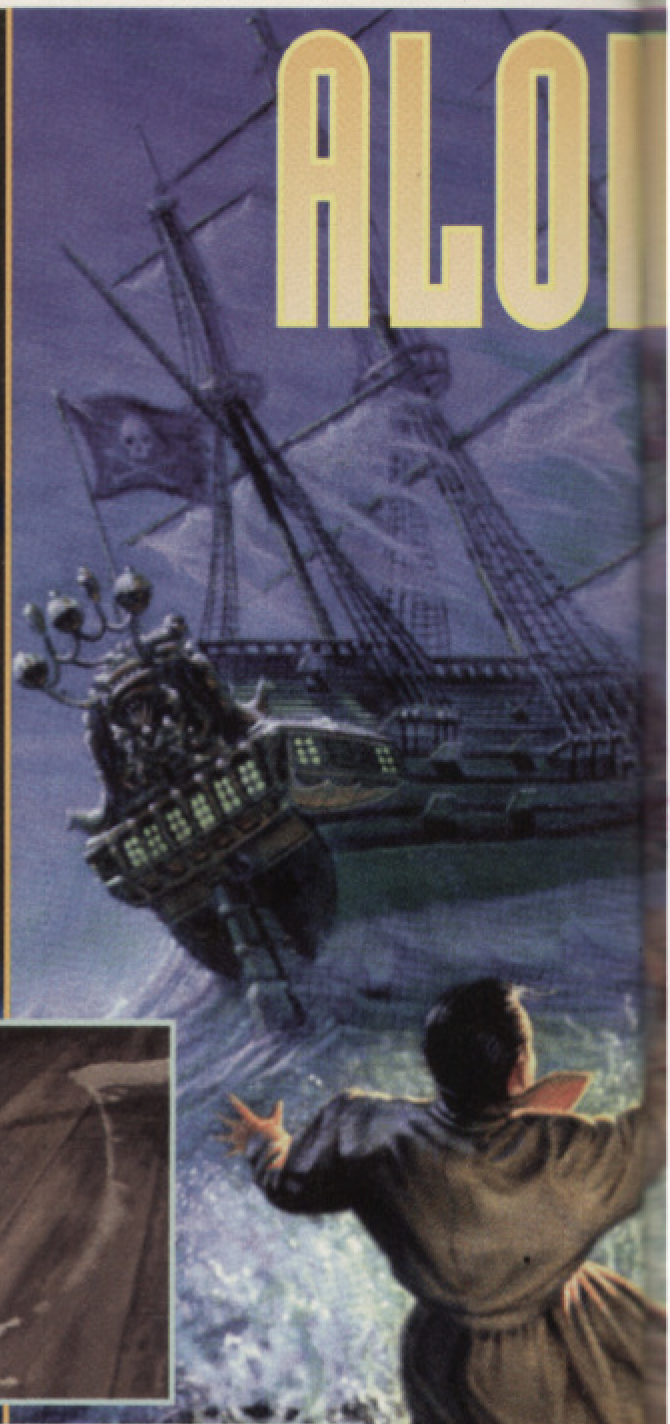
Originally a PC game written in 1993 – the first sequel to the groundbreaking Alone in the Dark.

GAME AIM

Private detective Edward Carnby investigates the kidnapping of a small girl, braving pirates, voodoo and the undead on the way.

BEAT THIS

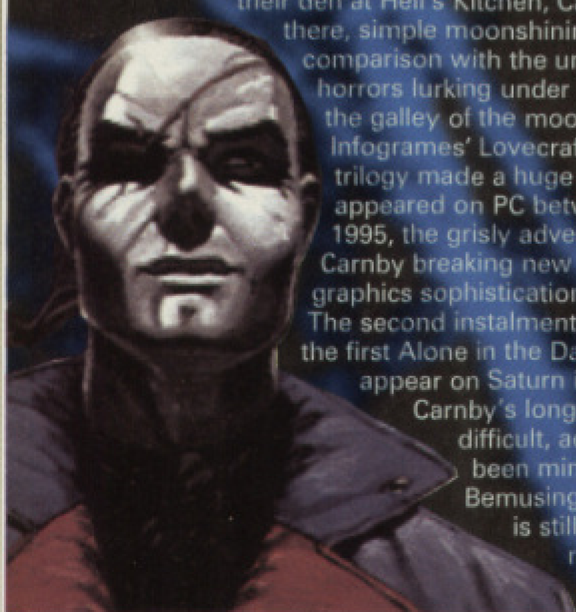
DISCOVER GRACE



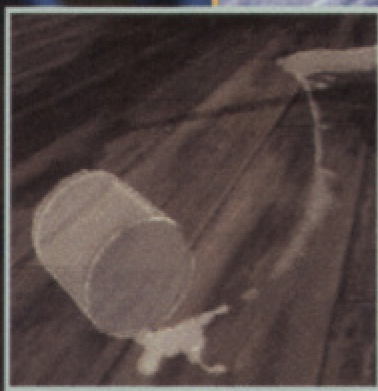
The year is 1724. Pirate One Eyed Jack and his men have gained immortality by entering into a sinister pact with voodoo priestess Elizabeth Jarret – in return for their gift the men must sacrifice a child on Christmas Day every 100 years.Two hundred years later the pact is due for renewal, and eight year-old Grace Saunders goes missing...

Private Investigator Edward Carnby has been contacted by his friend Striker, who has since disappeared investigating the kidnapping of Grace. Carnby follows in his trail, tracing the pirates to a bootleg liquor operation they are operating from their den at Hell's Kitchen, California. Once there, simple moonshining pales in comparison with the unspeakable horrors lurking under the house, and in the galley of the moored ship.

Infogrames' Lovecraftian adventure trilogy made a huge impact when it appeared on PC between 1992 and 1995, the grisly adventures of Edward Carnby breaking new boundaries in graphics sophistication and goriness. The second instalment of the trilogy is the first Alone in the Dark game to appear on Saturn in Japan, Edward Carnby's longest, and most difficult, adventure having been minimally tweaked. Bemusingly, however, he is still not alone, and rarely in the dark. Hmm...











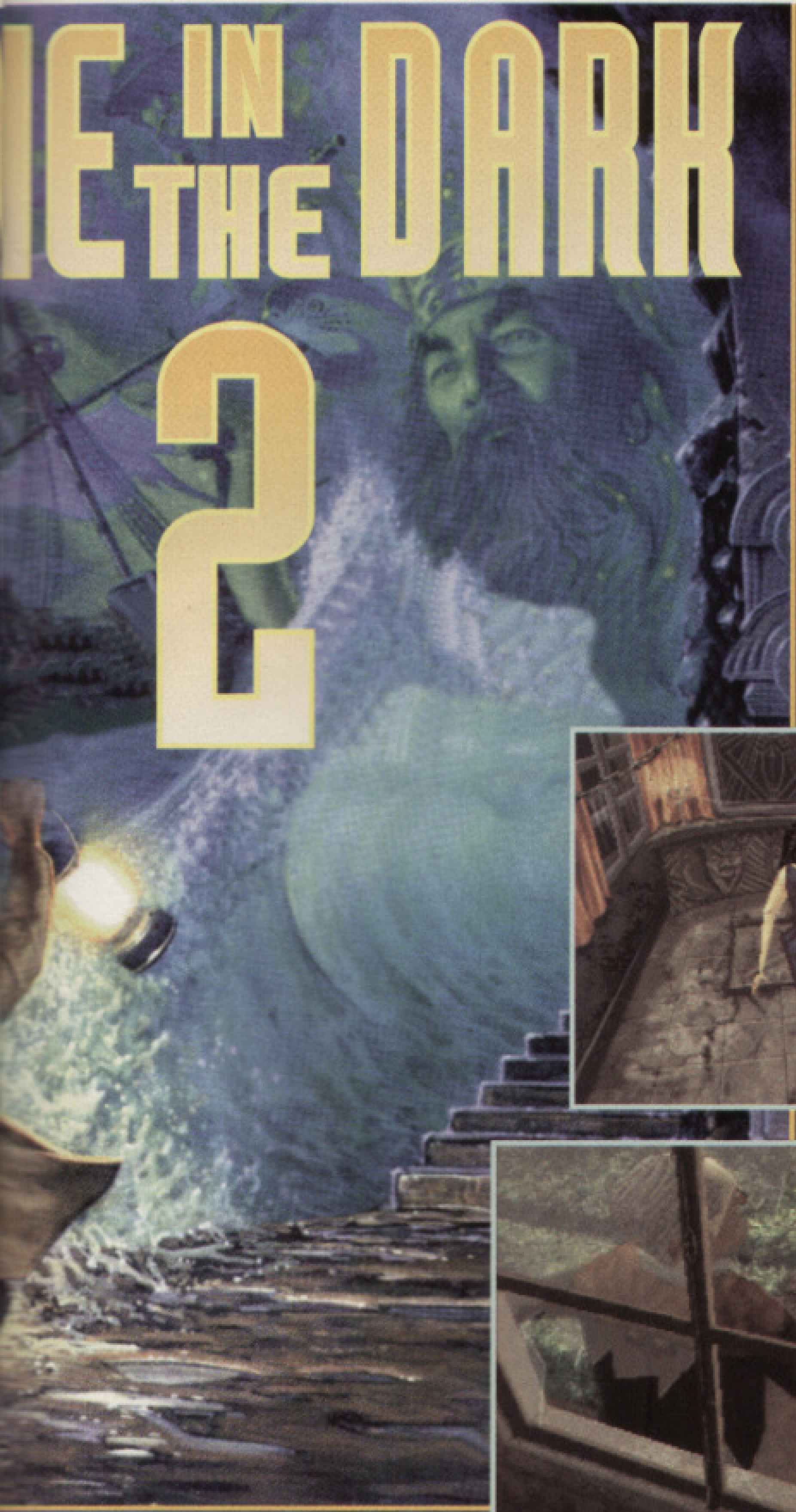
GRACE'S FAVOUR

You play most of the game looking down, or along, at yourself in the form of Edward Carnby. As you wander around the various locations, camera angles change to present a cinematic feel to the proceedings. Once you've escaped from the house, you'll inevitably find yourself kidnapped by the pirates. At this point, you instead play as the little girl Grace. Unarmed and practically defenceless, you must find ingenious ways to use the diminutive girl's size to defeat the pirates and help free Edward.









IN THE BAG

It's generally a good idea to pick up anything you discover on your travels, whether it's just lying around or discarded by one of your victims. Guns and ammunition have obvious uses – other objects may only take on significance later in the game. Hip flasks contain useful sustenance which you can gulp down with an amusing noise and green books are worth reading (if your Japanese is up to scratch) to gain useful clues that test your powers of lateral thinking. You'll be some way into the game before your swag sack will become so crammed that you're forced to discard anything.

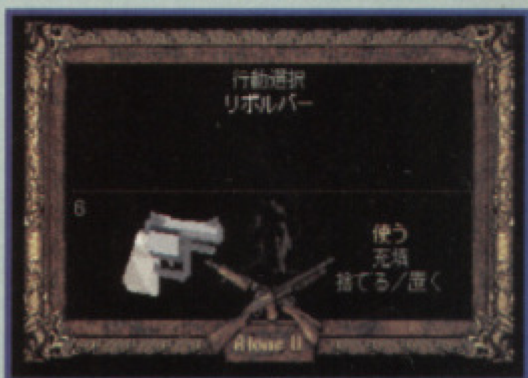






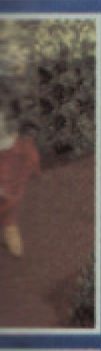




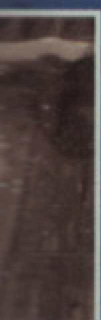










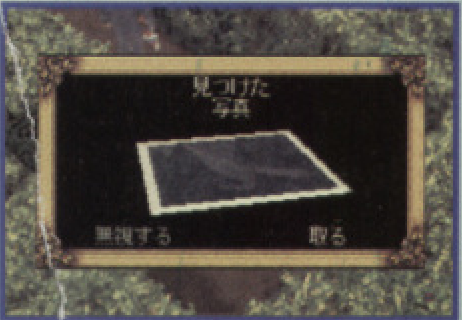




ALONE AGAIN OR...

The first Alone in the Dark game concentrated on Edward Carnby's efforts to escape a haunted house by making his way from the attic, down through various rooms and eventually swimming an underground canal in the cellar. Needless to say, all manner of spooks and menaces stood in his way of the kicking and scratching private dick. Alone in the Dark 2 saw Carnby add a vicious head-butt to his repertoire of aggressive moves, the game also refining his rather awkward gait and kicking motion. Alone in the Dark 3 was perhaps the most coolly received of the three, widely criticised for being too small and too easy. This bizarre Wild West adventure saw a very definite end to the Carnby saga – Infogrames apparently want to go back and refine the existing games before considering resurrecting the private eye for further instalments.







CONNECT FOUR

Acquired objects can be drunk, modified, read or, in the case of this photograph, used to establish an objective. The tomb seen in the picture is actually your way into the house. Once located in the maze, it can be accessed by attaching the rope to the grappling hook and throwing it over a particular statue. Connecting clues and discovered objects in this way is essential to succesful completion of the game.

What an original idea! A video game actually with a plot which is integrated into the action. The more you study the game's documents the more they reveal.







Not much sunshine in evidence in the 'Sunshine State', but Alone in the Dark 2 is no episode of Baywatch.





COMMENT



MARCUS

Having had such fond memories of playing and completing the first two Alone in the Dark games on PC many moons ago, it's difficult to express how disappointed I was playing Alone in the Dark 2 on Saturn. Yes, I felt let down by the basic polygon graphics, the awkward controls and the unfairly stacked odds, but in all fairness the game is practically identical to the one that first impressed me on PC. And that's the problem. Presentation and expectation of games have changed so much since then, and Alone in the Dark 2 has stood still. Aside from some extra detail on the characters' faces and clothes, and a tinny drum machine-style accompaniment to the soundtrack, this is unchanged from the PC version. All the original's faults are present – bizarre camera angles obscure important action and the game frustrates in all the wrong places. This is compounded, however, by some noticeable slow down in CD accessing when new characters or locations are loaded up. The opportunity to enhance, or even update, a once intriguing game has been missed.



COMMENT



GUS

Alone in the Dark has an impressively structured plot. Years after the original release on PC, it's still possible to see how ambitious a game design it is. But Alone 2 suffers at the hand of Father Time, and also for some lamentable aspects of presentation. The disc access is unacceptably intrusive when it freezes the action, and the character control is often bloody frustrating. Also. wait for the English language version.

GRAPHICS — 70

▲The locations, such as the house and the pirate ship, look quite stylish.
▼The characters are woefully blocky and unconvincing.

ANIMATION — 50

▼ Shaky, basic and prone to glitching.

MUSIC — 60

▼Configured to stretch floppy disk-sourced PC technology to the limit. Things have moved on since then. This hasn't.

EFFECTS — 60

▼Again, these sound very dated. The opportunity to enhance the effects by using CD technology hasn't been taken.

PLAYABILITY — 54

▼There is a once great game underneath all this, but you won't want to spend too long looking for it.

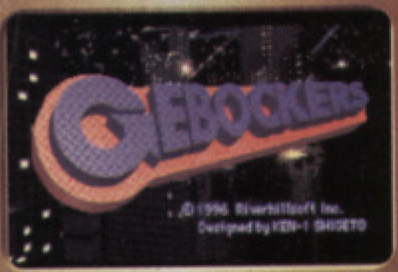
LASTABILITY — 51

▼Not worth persevering with – wait for something with the quality of Playstation's Resident Evil.

OVERALL — 52

Times have moved on, and this once classic game is now simply clumsy and dated-looking.





BY: SEGA

RELEASE: NOW

PRICE: IMPORT (£75)

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1-2 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
JERKY

ORIGIN

It's from Japan, and it's got cute characters and it's a driving/shooting type affair.

GAME AIM

Erm, this is kinda like Mario Kart but with guns. And special moves. Basically, you have to chase and destroy your opponent.

BEAT THIS

Win 7 fights

This game has been plastered all over the Japanese Saturn magazines recently. For the benefit of those that haven't seen any of those mags (what, you mean you can't read Japanese?) this is their basic format – loads of pages, most of which are adverts, loads of games involving young Japanese girls taking their clothes off (we kid you not), RPGs and weird games. These mainly star chunderingly cute characters with no noses and eyes that are almost as big as their heads. Although this game doesn't quite fit into the latter category, it possesses all the necessary cuteness to qualify it for saturation coverage in the Japanese game press. Your object is to trundle round an arena and locate your opponent, before letting rip with a few special attacks and blowing them up. Of course, this being a cutesy type of game, you don't see any limbs or internal organs being splashed all over the place. Which is a bit unfortunate really. Anyway, this is also the Saturn's first link-up game, which basically means that if you and a mate have two Saturns, a link up cable and two copies of the game, you can both play on separate televisions. So it all sounds pretty good then, eh? Well...





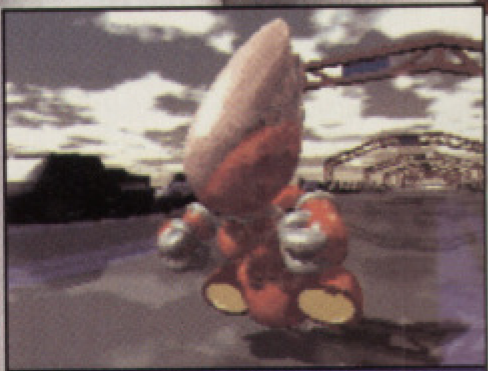




VIRTUA MARIO KART?

Well it is in a way. The action follows the character around from a behind-the-player perspective, a la Mario, and you drive (or float, or fly depending on who you are) about as the rest of the area rotates before you. This is useful for showing most of what is directly in front of you, particularly in the distance. When you have the person you want to beat the crap out of in your sights, then a small Lock On target will appear over them, meaning anything you fire will home in automatically.



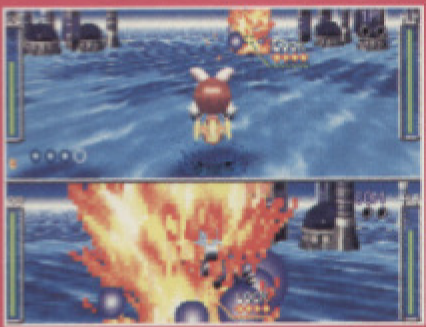


This is Ray – unhindered by the challenge of an unsightly head growth and searching for inner strength.



VIRTUA GEBOCKERS

Bearing in mind the popularity of one-on-one fighting games (and especially Virtua Fighter) in Japan, the people that developed Gebockers decided to incorporate pointers from that genre. As a result, executing the special attacks comes in a similar fashion to VF, with B,B,B,C pulling off moves in both games. But even if this bizarre hybrid of styles was successful in the Land of the Rising Sun, it's unlikely to be as well received by gamesplayers in the UK.





If you can't play link-up, then the standard game also offers a split-screen two player mode a less compelling compromise.





COMMENT



STEVE

This is the biggest turd I've had the misfortune to play in recent months. It's meant to be a light-hearted shooting type game, geared more towards the multi-player crowd than anything else, but it fails on all the above counts and more besides. But for the intro, the graphics look like they have been ported straight from the SNES Mario Kart. The playability is nowt in two player mode and dipping below crap in one player so how anyone can even consider purchasing this is beyond me. The sound is pants and the animation is practically nonexistent. All I can say is that this was a big fuss over nothing in Japan and won't do well at all here. If any you have any sense at all you'll leave it on the shelf to gather dust. Absolute rubbish.

COMMENT



MARCUS

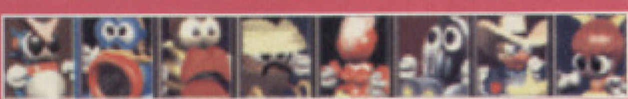
OK, the Saturn's first link-up game is a real disappointment, but let me counterbalance Steve's point of view with some positive aspects: the special moves are easy to execute, and fairly spectacular; this is one game where the personality of the players really comes through in the way their characters behave on screen (much like Virtua Fighter, and that's where the similarities end); and gameplay can get quite frantic and tense. Unfortunately, the game's limitations in scenario and characters (all pretty flat and samey) crush any real strategies you may want to develop over the course of your games. This might have been worth some attention as a budget title, but I couldn't honestly recommend shelling out serious money for what remains a bizarre novelty game with a strictly limited lifespan.

HOWDY SHERIFF!

The game features eight characters to choose from, each with their own strengths to exploit in the game. Certain characters are more adept at close range attacks while others would be more useful with long range blasts. But by far the best character is the Sheriff, known as Kid. He is one of the quickest people to play as, and also has an average amount of power, meaning he has good all round quality.







GRAPHICS 40

▼Poo. The intro is the only half decent thing in the game. Would look more at home on the SNES.

ANIMATION 38

▼Wee. Nothing even worth mentioning.

MUSIC 45

▼Pants. Annoying, repetitive, dull...Need we go on?

EFFECTS 40

▼Sucks. Silly speech that sounds totally out of place.

PLAYABILITY 36

▼Turdy. So boring, there is no reason at all to play for more than ten minutes.

LASTABILITY 38

▼Cack. Easy in one player mode. Boring in two player. You needed a new doorstop anyway.

OVERALL

In case you hadn't gathered by now, this blows goats. Please don't bother with this, for your own sakes.

38



BY: BMG

RELEASE: JUNE

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY



REFLEXES



OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
3

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
OK

ORIGIN

One of the first games to appear on the 3DO, this received mixed reviews when released. Has now arrived on Saturn, via Crystal Dynamics.

GAME AIM

Free yourself from the television set you have been sucked into by a mad insect inventor.

BEAT THIS

COMPLETE TOON WORLD



Hands up all those that have been to Spain on their holidays? Hmmm, most of you by the looks of it. Now hands up all those that saw a tiny lizard as they came out of their chalets/apartments/villas? Ahhh, just as many still. Finally, extend your arms if you tried to pick the little buggers up,only to find their tails fell off? All of you. I thought as much.

Yes it is a somewhat sad fact that these poor little reptiles can 'detach' themselves from their waggly bits, in a desperate ploy to escape the clutches of pesky predators and inquisitive fingers. But what you don't realise, is that they then hobble off and watch TV. Well, at least Gex does. He is a one hundred per cent couch lizard. Slobs about all day, watching the Neighbours repeats on UK Gold. Until one day that is, when he is mysteriously sucked into the ol' goggle box by a mad insect inventor. His crimes: for lapping up too many of his creepy crawly chums. So now, in order to escape from his TV hell (or Eldorado as we refer to it in the business) he has to roam around the set, collecting remote controls and videos to set himself free.

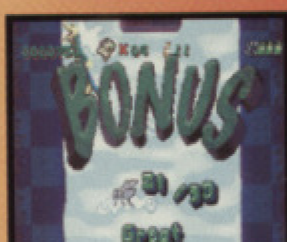


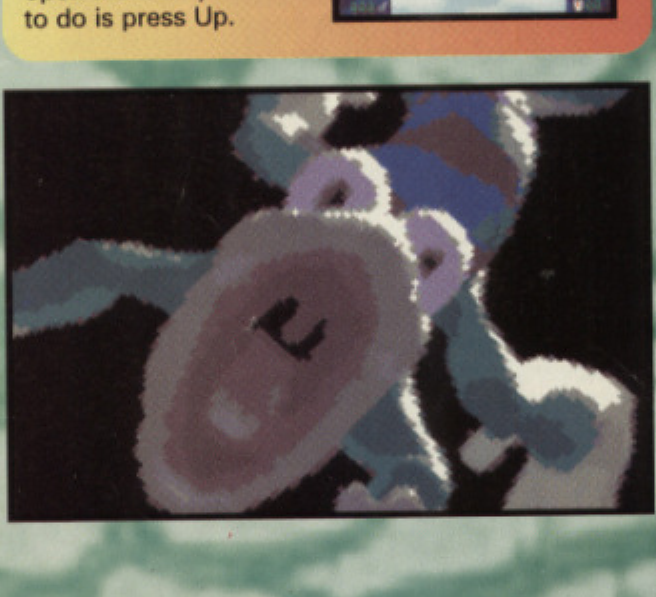
DON'T ADJUST YOUR AERIAL

At regular intervals in the game, you'll come across patches of static tele blobs (well you try describing them!) that warp you to other areas of the level, or bring access to bonus stages. Finding them is easy enough, as if you walk past the spot in which they are hiding, they will appear for you to jump into. The bonus stages consist of mainly collecting the bugs – however many you manage to collect in the set time determine how many lives or other such rewards you will reap. The later levels have these warps hidden away in doors, and to open them all you have to do is press Up.



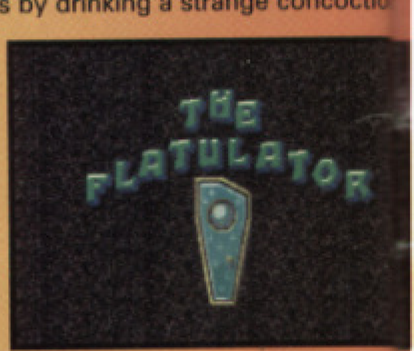






IT'S THE FLATULATOR

The game sometimes attempts to use humour to bump up credibility. The first time you hear the speech and see the full-blown chor poses it may raise a wry grin, or produce a full-blown chor but after that, everything leaves you decidedly stoney faced. However, there is one boss in particular who is virtually guaranteed to raise a giggle every time you see him, and he is, The Flatulator! He starts by drinking a strange concoctio which has a chemical element that causes his bowels to release toxic farts. As a result he gains a sudden rush of speed and goes shooting, belly first, across the screen. MEAN MACHINES can now exclusively reveal how to access this feat at home, by doing the following: Drink 10 pints of lager (if under age, 10 pints of Top Deck shandy), eat 2 plates of Tandoori Chicken, gobble 3 tins of Baked Beans, and then eat a packet off All Bran. Then stand back, and wait. Air fresheners are an optional extra.







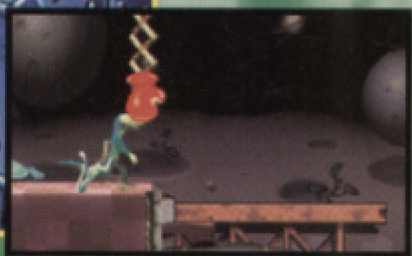
CRUSTY CLING-ONS

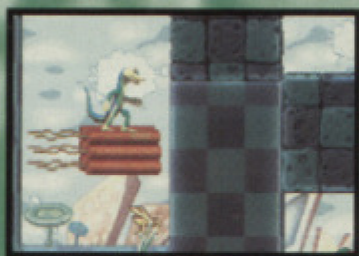
Well, it got your attention anyway. Being as he is a lizard, our Gexy boy is equipped with all the latest mod-cons that any self respecting gecko should have. The biggest asset is his ability to stick to almost any surface, enabling access to the most tricky of places by walking up walls, and along the ceilings. This may all seem like a fad, but some sections require Gex's suction pads to progress to the more elusive sections. The bonus, as far as you are all concerned, is that all of your moves (sticky tongue, and tail lash) are all still usable.















COMMENT



STEVE

Well it started off being a pretty enjoyable game. There we go. You can't say I didn't try to like it, but the plain and simple fact is that this is pants. Big saggy Y-fronts, complete with skids. I thought this had the possibility of being a really original platformer, and while is does introduce some newish elements to the platform field, it belongs in the Johnny Bazookatone crap gameplay category. The difficulty pitch ranges from insanely hard to 'is that it?' easiness, so you are continually building up frustration, losing lives on the same place, and then whizzing through the next two or three stages. And then there is the sound and speech. Funny once, then amusing, then annoying. All in one easy minute. You hear one phrase, and by the end of the level you'll hear it five more times. In fact, it's so annoying I can't help keep walking round the office saying 'Like the slime boys, nice touch.' Take it away, it's driving me INSANE!

COMMENT



MARCUS

Platformers aren't exactly flavour of the month. In fact, I can't remember a time when the attentions of developers and games-players haven't been more focussed elsewhere. This has created a climate where a Saturn platformer has got to be all the more impressive, all the more original and all the more compelling in order to make an impact. And this fails on all three counts. The graphics are outgunned by well-established titles such as Bug! and Rayman and the gameplay, while not quite plumming the depths of the unbelievable Johnny Bazookatone, is flat and repetitive. I for one was having flashbacks to such ancient 16-bit titles as Zool while negotiating the cheeky little lizard up and down high walls and around spikey blocks. This would have made a fine, if hardly memorable, Megadrive title. The Saturn deserves better.

GRAPHICS 60

▲Some nice touches when Gex is walking along the ceilings.
▼But unimaginative in the other sections.

ANIMATION 62

▲Gex is pretty well drawn, and has very lizardy moves and attacks. Not that lizards attack people anyway.

MUSIC 53

▼You don't really notice the music after a while because it's too quiet. And it's pants.

EFFECTS 50

▼Arrrggghhh. The speech is great...once or twice, but it's overused here to terrible effect.

PLAYABILITY 51

▼Some sections can be deceptively hard, while others are just plain boring.

LASTABILITY 52

▼Some sections can be deceptively hard, while others are just plain boring.

OVERALL

Could have been really good, but is sadly a bit of duffer. This will Gex on your nerves.

51

SEGA SATURN OUT NOW

April, not a month that immediately springs to mind when big software releases are being talked about. However, this could be the Megadrive's biggest slice of action in 1996, so we've made Toy Story the honourable 16-bit exception.

DARIUS
ACCLAIM
£34.99
1-2 PLAYERS
SHOOT 'EM UP

OUT NOW

This quirky, in many ways sad, scrolling shooter is worth some attention purely by being so reasonably priced. The problem with all the Saturn's fancy technology is that some of the old but good game styles are being left behind. To date, the only alternative horizontal scrolling shooter is Parodius. That looks better than this but is way easier. Darius at least challenges its players with 30 odd levels of demon fish and molluscs to pummel into space scampi. The visuals are occasionally wonderful, and frequently as weird as the music. If you like to choose the unpredictable option, make this your game of the month.





NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB
ACCLAIM
£44.99
1-4 PLAYER
SPORTS



OUT NOW

Strange when you think American Football was the game that really made the Megadrive back in 1992. People think it was Sonic, but John Madden '92 was the biggie that year, bringing sports games to a new height. Acclaim's Quarterback Club is a bold attempt to do a Madden on Saturn and in many respects it succeeds. Where Madden was the first to bring a stadium feel with a pseudo-3D perspective, Quarterback uses all kinds of virtual gubbins to make you feel you're participating in televised gridiron. The graphics are sophisticated but definitely functional, and the range of viewpoints covers every conceivable position you might want to play the game from. The presentation aspect of the game is confidently handled and the four-player option will have strong appeal for gaming communes.



We just find it a bit difficult to get worked up about a game with so many stops and starts, and so much complex strategy with little accompanying action. But that's American Football's fault, not Quarterback Club's.

OVERALL 85

A good start to football simulations, but best appreciated by the sport's existing fans.

OVERALL 69

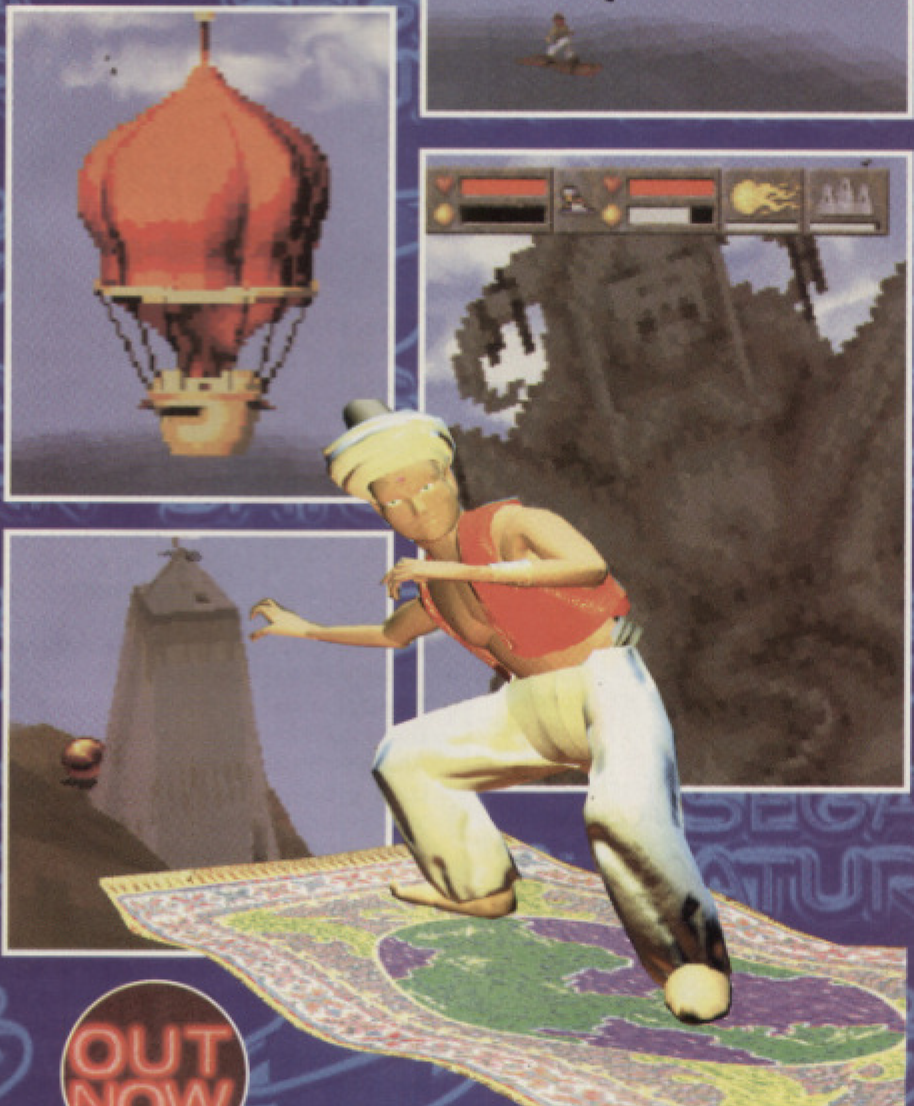
Not the pinnacle of shoot 'em upping, but the best fish-in-space title ever!

MAGIC CARPET
BULLFROG
£44.99
1 PLAYER
SHOOT 'EM UP



Without doubt one of the best games ever, Magic Carpet harnessed Bullfrog's ability to create abstract and original game ideas and their growing skill in realtime gameplay. Magic Carpet may appear to be a wandering, oversized shoot 'em up at first glance, but it soon reveals itself to be an epic struggle, with its 75 levels demanding total attention, guile, bravery and perseverance to crack. Some have denigrated this fine conversion for not adding to the PC original. Those were created for Pentium processor PCs, so conversions to this level are a tribute in themselves. What the critics should have spent time on is playing the game. It's more engrossing than just about any other Saturn release so far this year.





OVERALL 93

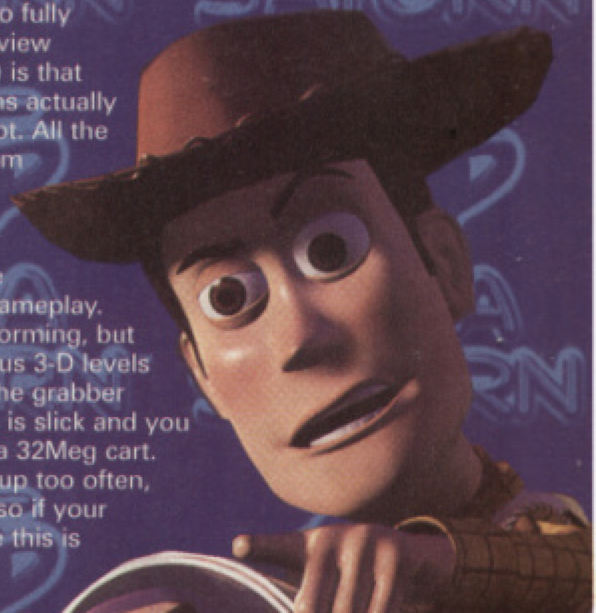
A solid and rewarding conversion of one of the best games yet devised.

TOY STORY
SEGA
£49.99
1 PLAYER
PLATFORM





Toy Story is clearly not a Saturn game. But it's presence in Out Now is warranted by it being reviewed by MEAN MACHINES several months ago and being too important to miss the official release date. Toy Story has been widely flagged as 'the first next generation Megadrive title' by an optimistic some and 'the last big 16-bit game' by other miserable gits. We think it sets a new standard. It's the work of a British developer, Traveller's Tales, who have squeezed every last bit of performance out of the hardware. Vibrant backgrounds merge with huge digitally animated sprites to create the characters and settings of the new movie, which everyone knows is the first computer-generated motion picture. The beauty of the game, which we failed to fully appreciate in the original review (having not seen the movie) is that each of the nineteen sections actually correspond to the movie plot. All the characters play a part — from the aliens of Pizza Planet to the scary-with-a-heart-of-gold mutant toys. Not only does the game integrate the scenes, it tries to vary the gameplay. There's a bias towards platforming, but there are also more ambitious 3-D levels set on the road and inside the grabber machine. The programming is slick and you really do feel the benefit of a 32Meg cart. Games like this don't come up too often, whatever format you have, so if your Megadrive is still kept active this is an obligatory buy.





OVERALL 92

One of the biggest games of 1996 and a sign of life in the old 16-bit dog yet.

MEAN YOB

Did you fall for my little prank last month. No? Well it was a bit poor, but someone out there was too ashamed to admit it. April Fool, in case some of you still haven't managed to work it out. Anyway, after much haggling with the hierarchy here at EMAP, I have managed to haggle some free stuff and will be giving it out to the sender of the best letter. But because all I ever get is only worth giving to the bin, I'll probably end up keeping it all for myself. In fact, you'll never get any prizes because there aren't any. Bunch of two-bit ponces the lot of you. Just send in your letters to SAD BLAGGERS 'R' DEFINITELY US, YOB'S MAILBAG, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

PUNY INSULTS 1

Dear Yob,
Where do you get off telling people where to stick their lives and girlfriends? Normally you either say 'Up a baboon's backside,' or 'The rear end of a camel'.
Well I'm sick of it. Now I'm going to take the piss out of you. Right, let's get this over and done with. First of all, Sega Power. I am an owner of one Sega Power mag and I have to admit that it is not that great, but you're not that great either. Take your hair for instance, absolutely CRUD. You'd be better off bald. And what about your baby habits like dribbling? You could have filled a whole swimming pool by now with all that gob hanging out of your mouth every month. Do you think it looks hard or something? I often wonder if you suck your thumbs as well. And finally, your height – you're a puny little maggot. Right, now I have a few questions for you.
1. How much do you get for this stinking job of yours?
2. Do you have a girlfriend, and if so, why on earth does she want to go out with you?
3. Who made up the name Planet Yobula? Very original. Probably a right twit.
4. Who does your hair?
5. Do you like Warhammer?
Please answer these questions and print my letter in your mag. Or I will be forced to squash your tiny body and shove it up a baboon's backside.
David Scholes, Addelstone, Surrey.
YOB:Such insults mean nothing to me. They aren't even original, dog breath. 1. I earn more money than you could ever hope to earn. I hear the sheep-fondling business is slow at this time of year anyway. 2. Well, I was seeing your mum, but then then they had to put her down, so I'm single at the moment. 3. Actually those were your mother's last words. 4. Vidal Baboon, the same bloke who flavours your breath. 5. Does Tom Cruise?



"Rayman vs Wimp Yob" by Chris Bell, aged 12. Yob ain't no wimp pussy cat you moneyfunster.

PUNY INSULTS: THE RETURN

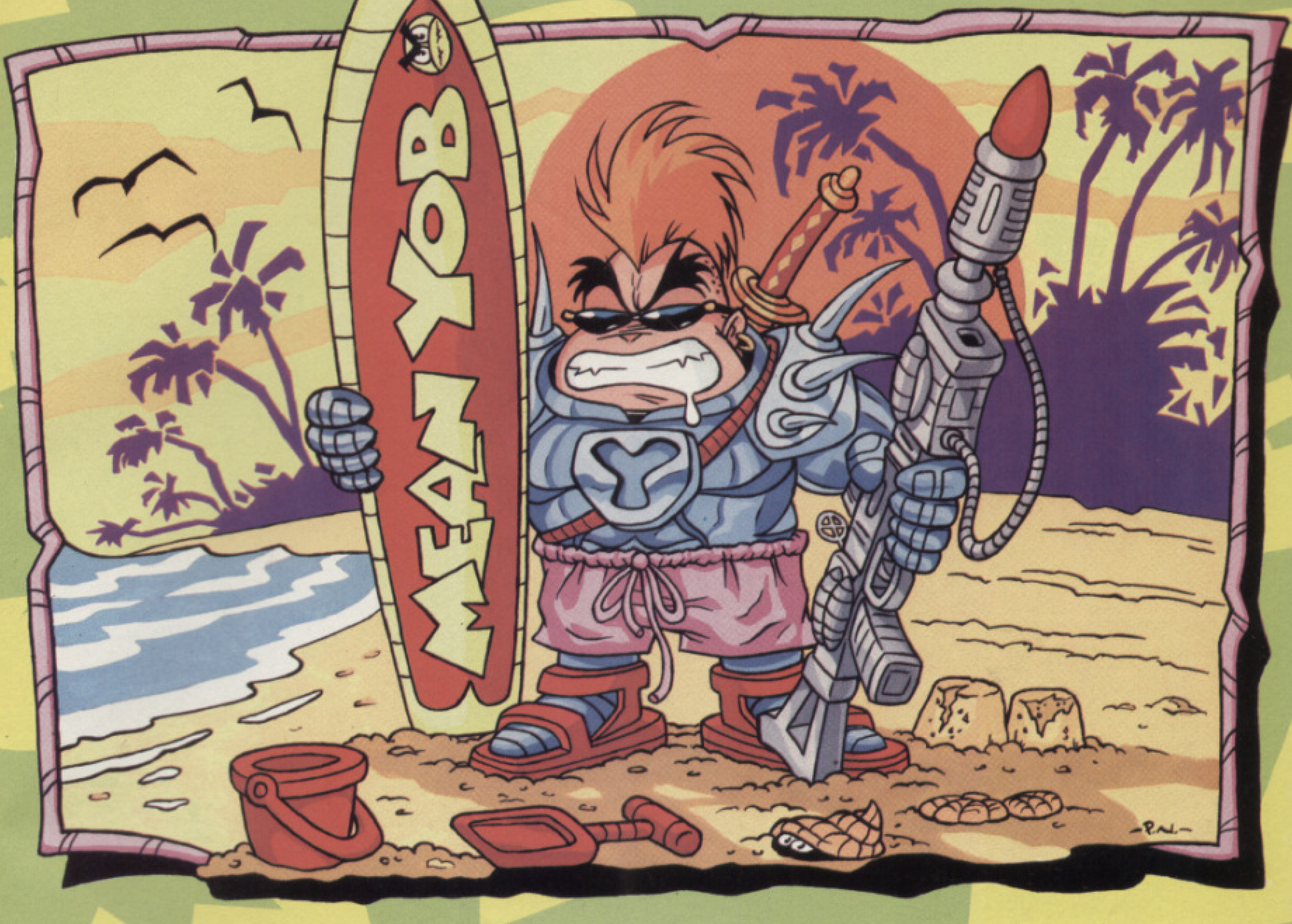
Dear Yob,
Hello, you are a fat knob with a crappy hairstyle. I like it when people write in insulting you, so here's one to add to the collection! You are the ugliest piece of arse hair I have ever seen in my life. Nobody likes you, face it. Go and slit your wrists and make everybody happy. You are so bad, your mother threw up at the first sight of you. Oh, and tell your mother I've got her undies and I'll bring them back next Thursday night. Your mother is so old, she owes Moses a tenner. Insulted yet? Well here's some more. You are the fattest little git I have ever come across in my life. I bet you smell like a pig's backside after a curry. I can't believe I wasted this time and energy on writing this letter. I bet you've never had a girlfriend. They probably all say you are a fat little turd with no friends, and who could blame them. Go shove your head down a bog that your horse, sorry your mum, has just crapped in, and you'll probably look even better, not that you could ever look any good. Go and shove that stupid stick (surf board) you're holding up your rectum, but don't forget to take your head out first. You are the little sweaty bits that can be found up somebody's arse. Go and crawl up the arse you came from! Goodbye Turd Face.
Chris Purdie, High Wycombe.
YOB:Yawn Yawn. How funny you are. You know what I think? I reckon that whilst your mother was slopping out, you accidentally popped out as some kind of mutated turd. Because she is so ugly anyway, she probably thought that she was looking into a mirror and raised you as her own. It wasn't until you started going all furry and crumbly (as turds do) that she became suspicious and decided to flush you away, disowning you. From there you completed your metamorphosis into a human. At least it explains why you stink of faeces.



Claire smells one of Mean Yob's eggy pumps and starts to whine: "How come your guffs smell worse than mine, even when I've had a curry!"

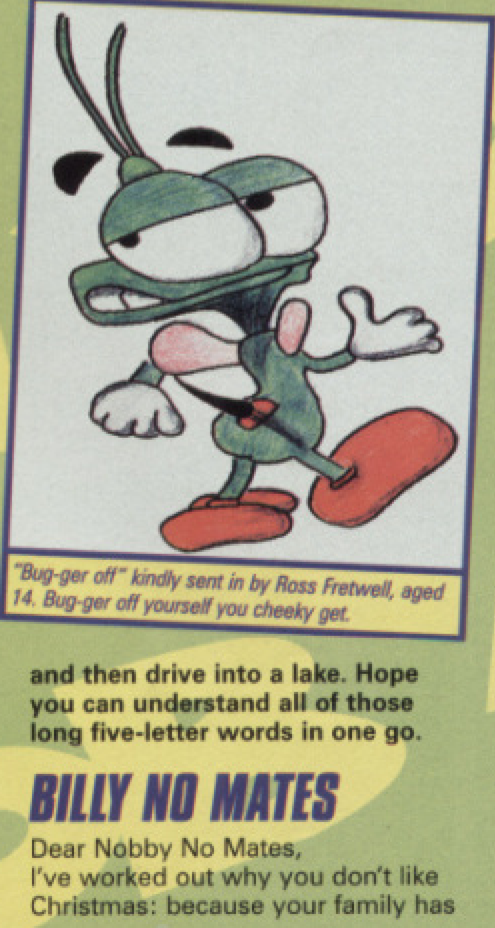
MASTER SYSTEM REJECT

Dear Yob,
I have a big question to ask you. Will any of these games come out on the Megadrive: Doom, Ground Zero Texas, Road Avenger, Thunderhawk, Sim City, R-Type, F-Zero, Nebulus, Predator 1 and 2, Rick Dangerous, Test Drive, Bubble Bobble or Casino Games? (Sorry about it being so long, but answer it or I'll set my mates dog onto you).
Why do you have the same dribble on your mouth every month?
Asswipe.
Oh....um....what should I write next. Ah, Claire will you marry me? And Lucy, will you date Yob as you both suit each other? Marcus why don't you go and propose to a Master System?
Mr Sex God, Heaven
YOB:What? Casino Games? Bubble Bobble? Do me a favour dick wad, and sort your life out by trading all of games you have (judging by your tastes, you'll probably get about a fiver for them) and buying one of those joke disguises with the glasses, nose and moustache, to cover up the shame of being such a pleb. Then slowly re-introduce yourself to society, starting with English for Amoebas, and soon you'll be deemed worthy of my attention by asking sensible questions.



BUTT-LICKERS ANONYMOUS

Dear Yob,
"I read your comic all the time and love it! It's the best.
YOB:COMIC! COMIC! Cheeky sod, what do think this is the bloody Beano!"
HAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!
I laughed for hours and hours when I read the letter from John Harper in the August issue. And what you said!! I just had to write in as I knew it shattered your cool image. Well maybe cool is going a bit far. When I used to get fed up with my Master System and throw it out of the window, I used to pick up MMS and laugh my head off until I fell asleep. I know you will now crawl into a bottomless pit and never let yourself be seen again as I have brought your dreadful past out into the open, but all I can say is good luck.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA.
Stuart Marshall, Norwich, Norfolk
YOB:Dreadful past is not how I would describe your letter's influence, more like dreadful sap. What can you possibly gain from going HAHAHAHAHA, other than melting anything your rancid breath comes into contact with, is beyond me. Tell you what, why don't you climb in your tractor, stop chewing your bits of hay,



"Bug-ger off" kindly sent in by Ross Fretwell, aged 14. Bug-ger off yourself you cheeky get.

and then drive into a lake. Hope you can understand all of those long five-letter words in one go.

BILLY NO MATES

Dear Nobby No Mates,
I've worked out why you don't like Christmas: because your family has disowned you and you have no friends, therefore you never get any cards or presents, you piece of dag from a baboons butt.
Just one question: If all the people who write to you are such pathetic of human excrement, then how come you were put in charge of dealing with them?
The answer is that the other members of the MEAN MACHINES crew decided that you are just as pathetic and they thought that you'd fit in just perfectly (and it would keep you away from doing any damage to the actual running of the mag). Seeing as your only other vocation in life is to be a toilet cleaner for elephants suffering from diarrhoea.
Oh, yes, and what exactly is wrong with the Game Gear? I mean it's better than your choice of system, the Game Boy and Spectrum.
David Jenkins, Bishopsteignton, Devon.
YOB:This guy's handwriting and spelling was so poor that we all had a big argument about some of his words – dag or clag? The sensible people said it was clag, the people who understood how stupid this person is reckoned it was dag. Whatever it is, anyone who draws humorous references from Australians is a prize tosser anyway. A copy of the book 'Handwriting for Dunces' By Dag Clagger is in the post. Well done.

GOLFING SADDO

Dear Mean Yob,
I am very interested to know just how good I am at PGA European Tour 2. My best score is 236 (52 under par) for 72 holes, at Wentworth. My best score for 18 holes is 56 (16 under par) at Wentworth. Am I simply the best? Or is there some super human anorak who would dare suggest that he is better than I? If anyone reckons they can beat me, do not hesitate to contact me. I have a gut feeling that I could be World Number 1
Kenny (the boy) Highland, Hayes, Middx.
YOB:**There we go. Anorak challenges anoraks. Get in touch if you can shut him up.**

Let no one say we duck the issues of the day. Once again you readers display your intellects. Join us next month, when maybe Paul Johnson will decide to bore us al stupid. Again.

Q&A

Life is so full of annoying events that it's a joy to relieve it by answering your Q&A letters. You little shining lights with your earnest little questions. It always makes up for... Being last into the shower and discovering there's no hot water... Squeezing the toothpaste tube until you admit there is no toothpaste left... Sleeping next door to someone with a paranoid car alarm... Coming into contact with Coffeemate or any other 'non dairy creamer' without the proper protective clothing. But you make it all bearable. Wing your words to, YOU'RE TAKING THE P Q&A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

MATTEL

Dear Gus,
Firstly, congratulations on a superior magazine, brilliantly written. Now onto the questions
1. I am a great Star Trek fan, so is there any chance of a Star Trek game on the Saturn?
2. I'm also a great SF2 fan. Since Super SF2 Turbo was 3DO only, is there a chance that Capcom will release it, or maybe a compilation of all SF2 games, on Saturn?
3. Jimmy White's Snooker was brill on the Amiga, any chance of Virtual Pool or Virtual Snooker coming out on the Saturn?
4. Any word on the rest of EA's sports games for the Saturn?
5. Any new versions of classic Megadrive games (Ecco, Streets of Rage) coming to the Saturn?



6. Will the 10 player Bomberman game be a straight conversion of Hudsonsoft's Hi-Ten Bomberman, or will it have loads of new features?
7. Please tell me when Virtua Sonic and Virtua Fighter Kids are coming to PAL Saturn!
Kevin Hutton, Eccleston, St. Helens

GUS: 1. Interplay and their affiliate, Spectrum Holobyte, have traditionally had dibs on Trek, but neither has come forward with a next gen proposal.
2. I doubt it – Alpha is the apex of Streetfighter and Capcom have enough beat 'em ups as it is.
3. Very slim.
4. Madden's has supposedly undergone reprogramming and we've heard nothing on Hockey for months.
5. There may be something on Ecco at E3.
6. No details of new features at the moment.
7. These are arcade titles only at the moment.

HASBRO

Dear Gus,
I got a Saturn for Christmas, and I have a few questions that need sorting out straight away.
1. Why do you get a Scart lead when you buy the Saturn instead of an RF unit? Yet in the Playstation you DO get an RF cable. Because of this I had to shell out an extra £20.
2. Will there be any manager games i.e. Championship Manager, or Premier Manager on the Saturn?
3. What games would you recommend out of Sega Rally, Panzer, X-Men and MK 2?
4. I also have a Game Gear and I find it harder and harder to find games for it. Are the games beginning to dry up in this department?
William Queen, Glasgow

GUS: 1. Long and boring. Basically, boxing both leads would cost another £20. Sega researched potential buyers and found 80% would have SCART compatible tellies. The picture quality on SCART is FAR better than RF aerial, so it makes sense to give buyers the best possible package. A decent SCART monitor/telly costs about £170-£200.
2. After the success of Premier Manager, it's not to be ruled out.
3. All, except MK2 are excellent, but wait for Panzer 2.
4. There will be fewer Game Gear titles, but Sega want to have a few stunners for the handheld. Virtua Fighter is a perfect example.





MB

Dear Gus,
Because the Saturn now has Wipeout, Toshinden and Destruction Derby, will the Playstation be acquiring any Saturn games?
2. Will these games be out on the Saturn: Doom, Biohazard (Resident Evil) or Twisted Metal?
3. When is Road Rash coming out for the Saturn?
4. Will it be better than the Playstation version?
5. Does the Playstation have more companies developing for it?
6. Thunderhawk 2 on the Saturn has 24 missions, but in Gamepro it said that the Playstation version had 37. Why is this?
7. What's your best Saturn game?
8. V.R. on the Saturn is so crap, how can you say it's good?
Scott Wright, Ilse of Wight

GUS: 1. None of Sega's AM titles for sure.
2. Doom is def. Biohazard is probable. Bio — nah!
3. Due this summer.
4. I hope so, that was crud!
5. Development is roughly equal now.
6. Gamepro got it wrong.
7. Sega Rally.
8. Despite being graphically crap, I enjoyed the Grand Prix mode. Sad, I know.

PARKER BROS

Dear Gus,
Answer.
1. If you can fit Virtua Fighter on the 32X with 32 megs, why can't you fit it on the Megadrive?
2. How much did you rate VF on the 32X?
3. What about the Saturn?
4. I like RPGs. What's

the best for the Megadrive?
5. What does RPG stand for?
6. How much did you give Samurai Showdown?
7. How much did you give Lethal Enforcements?
8. How many bits are there in a Mega CD?
9. Why don't Sony make games for the Playstation and Namco do?
10. Are Sony going to make games for Sega anymore?
11. Is Doom on the 32X any good?
12. Is the rumour that SSF2 Turbo is coming out on the Game Gear a big lie?

Name and address withheld (!)

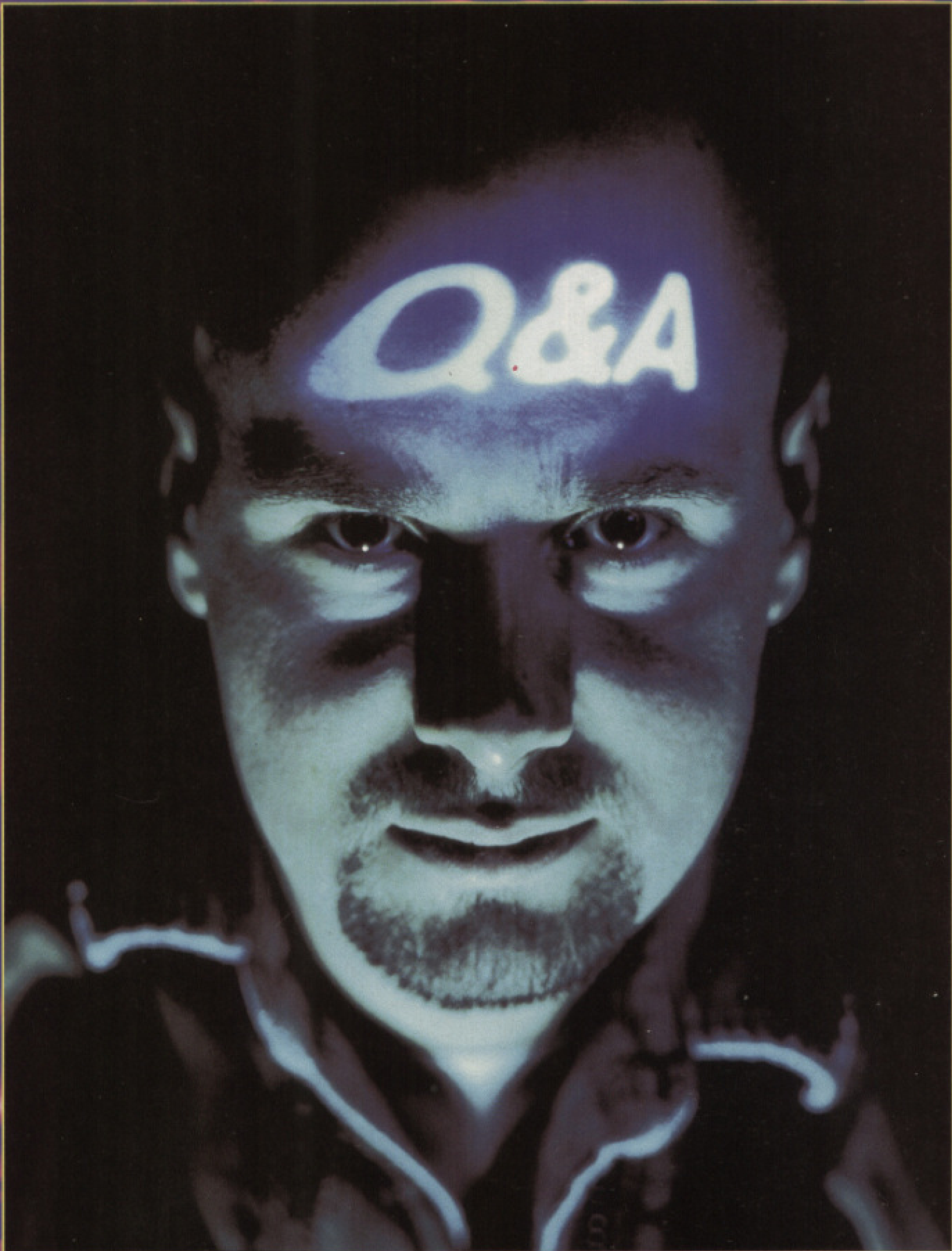
GUS:1. It's not to do with size. The 32X is much more powerful than the Megadrive.
2. 93%.
3. It was 95%, but we'd give it 88% now.
4. Landstalker.
5. Role-playing game.
6. 50-something. It took a tanking.
7. Can't remember. Hey get some back issues.
8.It's a 16-bit CD drive.
9. Sony do. It's called SIE.
10. Yes, through Psygnosis.
11. Yes.
12. Lies.

SPEARS

Dear Gus,
Please answer my questions.
1. Why can't the Saturn and arcade versions of games be released at the same?
2. The Saturn can run up to 60 frames a second, so why do games like Sega Rally and Daytona have to run at 30 frames per second? If they ran at 60 frames per second their graphics would be arcade perfect, right?
3. Why didn't the Saturn Daytona have a two-player mode like Sega Rally?
4. Why isn't AM1 and AM3 making games for the Saturn?

Barry Bowles, Peterborough

GUS:1. Why would people go into the arcades? Would films come out on video at the same time as at the cinema?
2. Frame rate is just one consideration. Rally and VF2 actually run at 60 frames, but this requires excellent programming skills.
3. Lack of time.
4. They are: Sega Rally and Baku Baku are both AM3. AM1 is producing Virtual On.



ACTION GT

Dear Gus,
Your mag is great and I have bought every single copy since it began, so can you answer these questions...
1. How come the Megadrive can have the game Toy Story with the level called 'really inside the claw machine' which is very like Doom, but can't achieve the actual Doom game?
2. Being as the Megadrive is going out of fashion, why don't Sega lower the prices of the games?
3. Is Fifa '96 on the 32X any good? My Dad was going to buy me it for Christmas (only because he wanted Fifa) but when he saw the graphics, I wasn't allowed one.
4. Please give me a Saturn!

Adam Smith, Coventry

GUS1. That level is fantastic, but its still not anywhere near Doom standards.
2. It still costs as much to make them, but there's loads of bargain software out there.
3. It's crap. A real mess.
4. Sorry, that's a demand, not a question.

PALITOY

Dear Gus,
I don't mean to distract you from your margarine-lubricated wrist movements, but I have a few

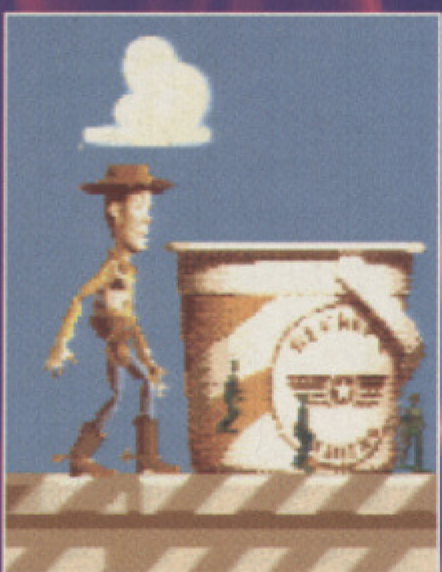




questions for perusal.
1. Is the Saturn better than the Playstation?
2. When is Striker '96 coming out on the Saturn?
3. How do you select the hidden car on Sega Rally?
4. Does Q & A stand for queer and aging?
5. You like Shun from VF2.
Eva Foot (from the half way line)
GUS:1. Yes.
2. Someone says May, but I doubt it.
3. See Sreve's tips for that sort of guff.
4. Oh, I'm sure.
5. No, I like Rafale. Shun's your dad.

CHAD VALLEY

Dear Gus,
I think the new pic is great, and please can you answer the following questions.
1. Do you know the release date and/or the price of the stunning Guardian Heroes?
2. Do you have any news on the brilliant looking RPG Dark Saviour?
3. Is there any chance of the Playstation game Discworld being released on the mighty Saturn?
4. Do you have any information i.e. release date, price etc. for Resident Evil on the Saturn?
5. Do you have any plans to covermount any playable Saturn demo discs?
6. Are Sega planning any more TV ads as the last one was really cool?
Thanks for the help and I would just like to say that Lucy is better than Claire.
Thanks again.
Jaime Slater, Oxford.
GUS:1. April and £44.99.
2. See the WIP.
3. Yes. It's only a couple of months away.
4. It's not even confirmed for Saturn.
5. We have secret plans for all contigencies.
6. There'll be more ads come winter.



PLAYSKOOL

Dear Gus,
Please could you answer my questions.
1. In issue 41, I saw clips of an arcade game called Sonic Fighter. Will this be released on the Saturn?
2. Why have Sega released three Sonic games for the Game Gear but haven't made any new ones for the Megadrive?
3. Why isn't the Nomad coming out in England?
4. In Sega Pro it said "Sega release a Nintendo Ultra 64 add-on for the Saturn and the first game for it is Mario 64." Is this true and if so when is it coming out?
5. Why do fools fall in love?
6. Is a version of Chaotix coming out for the Megadrive?
7. Seeing as Nintendo bought out Mario 64, are Sega planning to bring out a 3-D Sonic platform game for the Saturn?
8. How did they get all the animals to talk in Babe?
9. Is Jas Mann from the group Babylon Zoo a transvestiet or is he just trying to make a fashion statement?
10. Have I spelt Transvestiet right?
Gary Russell, Brandon, Suffolk
GUS:1. Depends how it does in the arcade.
2. They're taking their time.
3 Sega thought it was too expensive.
4. It was an April fool from the arch-fools.
5. Indeed.
6. Nope.
7. See gossip...
8. Ask Eammon Holmes.
9. He's worse than that, he's a one-hit wonder.
10. No.

WADDING-TONS

Dear Gus,
Please could you answer my 1 simple question.
Are there going to be any more decent games for the Game Gear?
James Keenes, Upper Boddington
GUS:Maybe



TOMY

Dear Gus,
I think the mag is neat and will continue to buy it if you answer my questions...
1. Why doesn't your mag show any Mega CD games?
2. Will there be any new games coming out on the Mega CD?
3. Do you think that Super Skidmarks on the Megadrive is worth buying?
4. Will there be any chance of X-Men: Children of the Atom being released on the Mega CD?
5. Is there any chance of a fax/modem add on being released for the Megadrive or Mega CD?
Sami Kasap, SE London.
GUS:1. There aren't any.
2. To be frank, I'm aware of none.
3. Yes.
4. Never.
5. Never never.

TONKA

Dear Gus,
1. What happened to X-Perts, as I haven't heard about it for ages and I read somewhere a while ago that it would be released sometime around now?
2. Why hasn't Doom been released on the Saturn yet?
3. Is Quake going to be released for the Saturn?
4. I read somewhere that a company were developing a Saturn 2. Is this true and if so will it be a new 64 bit machine or will it be just a different case for the original Saturn?
5. Will the Megadrive version of International Superstar Soccer be as good as the SNES?
6. When is Sonic 4 coming out and will it be a platformer or a beat 'em up?
7. Is the Sonic beat 'em up coming to the Saturn?
8. Would Virtua Fighter be possible on the Megadrive by using the SVP chip, or some other chip like that because it is dead smart?
9. Are the 32X and Mega CD dead?
Doug Forrest, Barrow-in-Furness
GUS:1. X-Perts has been spasming about in development Hell for donkeys.
2. Ask GT that.
3. Yes.
4. This is rubbish and unsupported conjecture by 'Next Generation' magazines trying to maintain flagging reader interest.
5. Should be.
6. More soon.
7. Maybe.
8. Unlikely.
9. The 32X is twitching.

I'll see you next month. But then maybe not. Because, you see, I won't last long in this business because I take everything so personally. Apparently.


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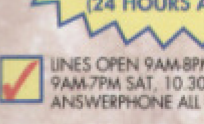
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